

## WORKSHOPTALKS

### Workers defy SEIU power grab

by Htun Lin

When United Healthcare Workers West (UHW) broke with SEIU International President Andy Stern because of his program to align union goals with the goals of management, the International tried to put UHW into trusteeship. On Friday, Sept. 26, a hearing was held in San Mateo, California, regarding the decision to put UHW into International trusteeship.

All workers should be outraged at this anti-democratic, anti-union initiative and support UHW's efforts to return SEIU to principles of labor solidarity and basic democracy.

This naked power grab was resisted by thousands of UHW members who came from all over the state to demonstrate. This parallels the current crisis in the financial markets and ruling class efforts to save themselves on our dime. U.S. Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson issued dire warnings of "impending economic disaster on Main Street," should Congress fail to give him unilateral power to spend \$700 billion in a bailout, without so much as a modicum of public oversight and redress for taxpayers and homeowners.

With this bailout, the workers are exploited twice over. The first time, it is in the shop, where capitalists skim off surplus value from workers through unpaid hours of labor. Now, Wall Street comes back a second time to rob workers, by raiding the federal treasury, accumulating more debt to be repaid by exploiting workers in the future even more.

SEIU President Andy Stern's attitude towards workers is not that different from Henry Paulson's. He, too, believes that workers' well-being comes only

Continued on page 3

## BLACK/REDVIEW

### Black Dimension and Communist Manifesto

by John Alan

**Editor's note:** On this, the 160th anniversary of the Communist Manifesto, we are printing excerpts of a talk given by John Alan on its 150th anniversary.

The *Communist Manifesto* does not specifically mention the African-American dimension. Its main focus is on the coming European working class revolution of 1848 and the workers' opposition to the capitalist form of production... When Marx speaks about the world market, he is also speaking about labor-power as a world market commodity as well as human beings in the form of slaves as a commodity. For instance less than a year before writing the *Communist Manifesto* Marx wrote the following:

Direct slavery is the pivot of our industrialism today as much as machinery, credit, etc. Without slavery, you have no cotton, without cotton you have no modern industry. It is slavery that has given value to the colonies; it was the colonies that created world trade; it is world trade that is the necessary condition for large-scale machine industry. Also, before the slave-trade in Negroes, the colonies supplied the Old World with but very few products and did not visibly change the face of the earth. Slavery is thus an economic category of the highest importance (*Letter to Pavel Annenkov, Dec. 28, 1846*).

Within the *Communist Manifesto* Marx also characterized the proletarian movement as the "...independent movement of the immense majority, in the

Continued on page 8

## Bailout can't save capitalism from its own gravediggers

by Ron Kelch

As news spread that Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson was asking the government for \$700 billion to buy "toxic" assets to save Wall Street banks, Congress was inundated with a flood of angry opposition in letters, e-mails and calls from ordinary working people. The tidal wave of communications—99 to 1 against—didn't subside even after threats that failure to act might mean the collapse of the capitalist system. There were also spontaneous public demonstrations throughout the country. On Sept. 25 alone there were 251 rallies in 41 states against this humongous bailout. On Sept. 27 thousands joined the California Nurses Association marching across the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco against the bailout and for universal single-payer health care.

Events leading up to this public outrage began on Sept. 18 when Paulson, a former Wall Street investment banker, and Ben Bernanke, Chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank, visited President Bush, and then the leaders of the Democratic Party-controlled Congress. They requested immediate action to raise the national debt ceiling to \$11.3 trillion, give Paulson a whopping \$700 billion and unfettered authority to buy up Wall Street's bad debt, mostly mortgage-backed securities and credit default swaps (CDS) that insure those securities. This, they said, was the only chance to avoid a total meltdown of credit markets and another Great Depression.

This "mother of all bailouts" was preceded just ten days earlier with a \$200 billion Fed takeover of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, which together own \$5 trillion or half of the entire U.S. mortgage market. When Wall Street investment bank Lehman Bros., also previously



Nurses demonstrate against the bailout on San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge

designated as "too big to fail," came calling, the Fed let it go bankrupt. Credit markets locked up, including money market funds, which banks and companies use to finance daily operations. There was widespread lack of confidence that any given bank could repay their loans. There was even the beginning of an old-fashioned run on the bank between banks themselves and by ordinary depositors, withdrawing uninsured money market funds.

Then came the impending collapse of AIG, the world's largest insurance company holding half a trillion dollars in CDS and employing 116,000 in 130 countries. A single bank—Goldman Sachs, the unregulated Wall Street investment bank Secretary Paulson headed until 2006—

was liable to lose up to \$20 billion if AIG could no longer pay its CDS claims. The Fed turned again 180 degrees and gave AIG an \$85 billion loan and, in effect, nationalized this corporate giant by demanding nearly 80% ownership in exchange.

### IDEOLOGY AND REALITY

By the time of the \$700 billion offer-you-can't-refuse, politicians and bankers alike were in a giddy-whirl of free-market ideology and nearly simultaneous embrace of direct state control of vast corporations and sections of global finance. Liberal economist Paul Krugman, who supported the bailout eventually passed by the Congress, shared his half-joking first reaction: "Commissar Paulson has just seized the means of production." The only thing new in these ideological poles—

Continued on page 10

## Ecuadorians reject corruption

In voting to approve a new progressive and nationalistic constitution, the vast majority of Ecuadorians have again scored a major victory against the traditional Right and the capitalist "owners" of the country.

Last year an unprecedented 81% of Ecuadorians had voted to create a Constituent Assembly with a mandate to propose a new Magna Carta for the country, and then gave the supporters of President Rafael Correa a healthy majority in the Assembly. Now, in a referendum held on Sept. 28 by an overwhelming margin of nearly three to one, the people of Ecuador voted to adopt the new constitution.

The new constitution provides for the protection of the nation's natural resources (including land and water) and creates a pluri-national state in which the rights of women, racial minorities, and Indigenous communities are protected. It places a major emphasis on human rights; allows for civil union for Gays and Lesbians; free health care for seniors, women who are pregnant and nursing, and those with major illness such as cancer and AIDS; and free public education up to the university level. It prohibits the establishment of foreign military bases within its borders—Correa has already made it clear that the large U.S. airbase in the major port of Manta will be dismantled when the treaty that created it expires in 2009.

**ALTHOUGH THE NEW** constitution was put together in haste and is an unwieldy document of more than 200 pages (and it remains to be seen if the government can generate the financial resources or has the capacity to create the institutional infrastructure to comply with its objectives in a timely manner), its approval by the Ecuadorian masses represents another victory for Correa, a U.S.-educated economist who refers to himself as a "Christian Socialist." It provides a basis for continued reforms aimed at the various forms of capitalist imperialism that have plagued the country since its inception. This includes a determination to redistribute wealth through taxation and subsidies, protective tariffs for local industry, and fair labor laws. The government already has shown a determination to challenge unfair international debt and to expel industries that violate its laws and damage the environment. Although the government is not without its internal critics, it is by and large supported by all the progressive social

movements in the country, along with the Indigenous communities and organized labor.

What is perhaps most astonishingly refreshing is to see nearly seven out of every ten Ecuadorians say "Yes" to a constitutional initiative that resoundingly rejects the corrupt traditional political parties of the Right, the financial and capitalist industrial sector, the traditional economic oligarchies, and the reactionary hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church. This in spite of a Rovian-type campaign against the constitution that was based upon distortion and fear; raised the specter of dictatorship, rampant abortion, homosexuality and godlessness; and which had the support of the majority of the media, the Church, the banks, the industrial sector, the political pundits, and the far right Social Christian Party, which has ruled on the Coast of Ecuador for decades (I find it fascinating to ponder why Ecuadorians seem to be more "Rove-proof" than North Americans).

**THIS, OF COURSE,** does not mean that the capitalist class and the Right are acknowledging defeat. As with the four separatist provinces in Bolivia, which have brought that country to the brink of civil war through U.S.-supported sabotage and right-wing terrorism (see "U.S. plots with right wing in Bolivia," page 10), Jaime Nebot, Mayor of Guayaquil and leader of the Social Christian Party, has threatened to initiate a separatist movement (which is specifically prohibited by the new constitution) and has made it clear that resistance to progressive reform will continue with a vengeance. However, his hand has been weakened significantly by the overwhelming "Yes" vote at the national level, and even a slim plurality over the "No" vote both in Guayaquil and the broader coastal Province of Guayas.

All this also does not mean that Correa necessarily understands the law of value and is prepared to lead a frontal attack against capital itself. He is radically progressive in a nationalist sense, but not a socialist in the Marxist sense. Nonetheless, he symbolically heads a movement that represents the masses of Ecuadorians who are passionate for fundamental change against the corruption and plundering of the nation's wealth, which has left a legacy of poverty and hunger. It is a movement that is not going to rest until a genuine humanistic society replaces that of inherent capitalist exploitation.

—Participant/Observer, Ecuador

## ON THE INSIDE

p. 4 WRITINGS OF RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA  
Capitalist Production/Alienated Labor

p. 9 EDITORIAL

U.S. Pushes Pakistan into the Abyss

p. 11 Remembering Cyril Smith

ONLINE: [www.newsandletters.org](http://www.newsandletters.org)

# Review: 'Women of Color...'

by Susan Van Gelder

*Women of Color and the Reproductive Rights Movement*, by Jennifer Nelson (NYU Press, 2003).

On the cover photo from a 1979 demonstration, Latina and African-American women march with signs reading "No forced maternity/No forced sterilization," "Women must control the means of reproduction," "Keep abortion safe and legal." From extensive research, Dr. Jennifer Nelson, Director of the Sarah Isom Center for Women at the University of Mississippi, captures not only the activism of radical, Black and Latina feminists but as well the conceptual consequences of that activism.

## CHANGING THE MOVEMENT

Even though this book is now five years old, Nelson's thesis that Black and Latina feminists of the 1970s transformed the mainstream battle for abortion rights into "a more complicated view of reproductive rights," is so important now, in our age of retrogression, that we must revisit it. She discusses: Redstockings, founded in 1967 by young, white middle-class women whose Civil Rights and anti-Vietnam War movement experiences led them to radical feminism; Black women's critique of the Black Nationalist Movement; and the struggle by Latina feminists in the Young Lords Party (YLP) to include abortion rights, safe birth control and no forced sterilization in Party politics.

Redstockings insisted on free abortion on demand for all women: "... women needed both economic power and access to reproductive control ..." (p. 24). In contrast to the National Organization for Women (NOW), which favored abortion law reform, Redstockings insisted on repeal of all restrictions because even under the 1970 New York State abortion law, "The women who are not stopped from having an abortion by the accusations of murder...are stopped by the remaining legal prohibitions, the terrible financial requirements and dangers of the 'criminal' alternative... evidence that the new law discriminates against the less well to do" (p. 49). Redstockings recognized that "poor women and women of color found themselves with problems that abortion could not solve" (p. 53).

Nelson concludes: "Black women seldom receive proper credit for the work they have done on reproductive rights...they offered a more complicated view of reproductive control than did either Black Nationalists or white women's liberationists...Politically active black women of the early 1970s ... rejected the Black Nationalist argument that the birth of children to black women reinforced black masculinity. They also disagreed with the claim that the use of birth control and abortion by black women spelled genocide for the race. Moreover, they criticized abortion rights feminists for their narrow focus on legal abortion, insisting that feminists needed to bring reproductive abuses ...such as involuntary sterilization—to the forefront...white feminists needed to forge an inclusive reproductive rights agenda that synthesized anti-poverty politics, welfare rights, and access to reproductive and basic health care if they wanted to include women of color in their movement" (pp. 56-57).

Nelson presents numerous Black women's organizations of the 1960s and 1970s and their specific critique of the Black Nationalist position on birth control, genocide, abortion and child-bearing. The same women fought to reveal the widespread, devious ways U.S. government agencies managed to fund sterilization at ten times the amount for contraception and abortions.

In 1970, the death of a young Puerto Rican woman from an illegal abortion in the South Bronx crystallized "an original reproductive rights discourse combining both feminism and nationalism stridently put forth by women in the YLP"—a Puerto Rican nationalist organization. This broadened feminist concept of reproductive rights peaked with the formation of a socialist-feminist organization, Committee for Abortion Rights and Against Sterilization Abuse (CARASA) in 1977 to oppose the elimination of most Medicaid-funded abortions.

## GAINING FREEDOM

Nelson shows that the struggles of women of color articulated what was needed for all women to gain reproductive freedom. As a Women's Liberationist since the mid-1970s, what Nelson's book shows me is

how far backward we've come from the highpoint of the Women's Liberation Movement. While mainstream feminism still fights primarily for the necessity of abortion rights, the tale is told in how they fight. Nelson's history shows *how* women—particularly women of color—refused to allow the struggle for abortion rights to be waged as a single-issue struggle, or to pull it out of the struggle for freedom. Mainstream abortion rights groups ignore this revolutionary history at their peril.

My one critique is that Nelson, by choosing not to discuss how the New Right anti-abortion attacks "significantly influenced the politics of abortion and reproductive rights groups" (p. 10), overestimated the lasting impact of Black and Latina feminism on the battle for reproductive justice. Because mainstream feminism took the ground of the Right instead of what came from women of color, they narrowed the fight for abortion rights to a single issue and were outmaneuvered. Since Nelson's "final purpose" is to help contemporary feminists "build an inclusive movement for reproductive freedom [my emphasis] for all women," this book provides an essential foundation for today's unfinished struggles.

## The anti-feminist Palin



On Sept. 13, in front of the Library in midtown Anchorage, over 1,400 people, in the biggest political rally ever held in Alaska, made it clear that they oppose Sarah Palin as their next Vice President.

In spite of the fact that John McCain is a misogynist who calls his wife sexist slurs in public, he is cynically trying to lure Hillary Clinton-type feminists by choosing Sarah Palin as his running mate. But Palin is not feminist because, like McCain, she holds positions that are harmful to women on issues like abortion and sex education.

As mayor of Wasilla, Alaska, she forced rape victims to pay for their own forensic exams, and, as governor, she has done little to combat the huge epidemic of violence against women in Alaska. And even though she would break a glass ceiling if she and McCain win the election, she was chosen on the basis of her gender not her qualifications. She is not knowledgeable enough to be Vice President, let alone President. She was also chosen because her theocratic views are extreme enough to appeal to religious right voters who had become apathetic about voting for Republicans who are not committed to their cause.

Palin has tried to claim the label of feminist by joining the anti-abortion group "Feminists for Life" (FFL) in 2006. FFL is a religious Right front group whose ultimate goal is to make abortion illegal. It uses feminist-sounding language but repeats the religious right's lies that all abortions are physically and emotionally harmful to women. FFL claims that no woman would ever choose to have an abortion—even for rape or health reasons—unless forced to by financial reasons or the pressures of society. It is lying when it claims to be the only group of "feminists" who support a woman's right to have a child and to be able to care for that child.

FFL explains away the absence on its website of information on, and campaigns to promote, sex education and birth control by stating that they focus on women who are already pregnant. It also calls them "preconception issues," implying that it expects all women to become mothers. It says its purpose is to concentrate on making resources available to pregnant women, but its childcare resources are only available to college students. It seems they pay lip service even to that modest goal because the main part of its "College Outreach Program" consists of sending speakers to campuses to persuade students that it is "feminist" to be anti-abortion. While some articles on its website state that working mothers face sexist discrimination, others steer mothers into leaving the workforce. FFL doesn't want to change society to help mothers, but to squeeze all women into a role of being stay-at-home mothers of many children.

Some have noted that, for Palin, fundamentalists have made an about-face over the issue of a mother of small children having a job, let alone holding public office. Palin is acceptable to the religious right because she is part of its attempt to infiltrate and co-opt feminism just as she is part of its stealth campaign to impose theocracy on this country.

—Adele

## WOMENWORLDWIDE

by Mary Jo Grey

A coalition of women's rights activists in Iran successfully persuaded a judicial commission to drop some of the most contentious, male-biased sections from a so-called "Family Protection Law" passed by Parliament in September. Yet they now face a smear campaign, including charges against the 2003 Nobel Peace Prize winner, Shirin Abadi, that she supports promiscuity and prostitution. Similar campaigns in the 1990s led to mysterious serial killings. In the past year, more than 20,000 women have been attacked by "morals squads" and put under temporary police arrest for breaking the Islamic dress code and they still face the barbaric practice of stoning to death for adultery.

—Information from Nayerah Tohidi, *Women's eNews*

A petition with more than 325,000 names gathered in less than a week was submitted by Planned Parenthood to the Department of Health and Human Services to stop a rule by the Bush administration that could redefine abortion to include the most common forms of birth control, which therefore could be denied to women by misogynist health care providers.

Two convicted rapists were pardoned by Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai after serving less than three years of an 11-year sentence. The victim found out when they walked into their village, forcing her and her husband into hiding. She had been gang-raped, mutilated with a bayonet and forced to walk home half naked after she and her husband spoke out publicly about their missing son, forcibly taken by armed men.

## Women in Afghanistan

*Editor's note: Elsie De Laere, a volunteer teacher for small Afghan and American-based NGO's, recently returned from her seventh visit to Afghanistan. Below are some of her comments given to an Amnesty International meeting in San Francisco.*

After 9/11 the U.S. government used the situation of women in Afghanistan as propaganda. They didn't really care about women's rights. Although there are many organizations currently in Afghanistan, the situation is by and large appalling.

We can't push western values on them. For example: some western teachers come to teach in Afghanistan in shorts, or mini-skirts, which makes mothers forbid their daughters to come to school.

The despair of Afghan women is shown by the prevalence of self-immolation. One woman said that this was the only way she could shame her family. Nothing else was dramatic enough to make the point of how insufferable her situation was. There has been an incredible increase of suicides by Afghan women returning from Iran.

Education of the next generation is the acknowledged way to improve the situation. There are entire provinces where daughters are kept from school because it's not "proper" for a girl to be taught by a man.

Only 14% of girls age 15-24 are literate (compared to 51% of boys). One cause is early marriage. Also, violence against schools for girls is increasing, with nearly 150 Afghan students and teachers killed and around 100 schools burnt down by militants between March 2007 and March 2008.

I despair at what humans do to each other, but then again, I see all around me great strength that gives me hope and courage. My mother was a great role model and I drew strength from her as I found my passion for women's rights and human rights in general.

## 'Breaking Barriers'

**CHICAGO**—The Working Women's History Project (WWHP) and the Chicago chapter of the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) held a program at the end of September on "Breaking Barriers: Women and Health."

Leading off the program was current Scholar-in-Residence at the Newberry Library, Adele Hast, who gave us snippets from *Women Building Chicago: 1790-1990*, the book she co-edited with Rima Schulz. We learned of Dr. Mary Harris Thompson who founded her own hospital to serve the wives and widows of Civil War veterans when other hospitals would not accept women patients; and Dr. Alice Hamilton, the first woman to teach at Harvard in 1919, and who was a pioneer in toxicology. Isabella Garnett and Elizabeth Hill worked in Evanston, Ill., to give opportunities to African-American women, Garnett and her husband founded Community Hospital to serve African Americans who were denied admittance at other hospitals.

The second half of the program was on groundbreaking medicine of today. Helen Ramirez-Odell, RN, chair of the National CLUW Health and Wellness Committee showed a video, "Say Something" by Tamika Felder, diagnosed with cervical cancer at age 25. This powerful work also featured singer-songwriter and survivor of cervical cancer, Christine Baise.

During the discussion session Hast recommended *Petticoat Surgeon* for additional reading, and Ramirez-Odell answered questions on the controversy of mandatory vaccines for cervical cancer which only protect against two of the many viruses that can infect the cervix and is being aggressively promoted by the drug manufacturer for use in girls and young women.

—Sue

**NEWS & LETTERS**  
VOL. 53/NO. 5 October-November 2008

News & Letters (ISSN 0028-8969) is published bi-monthly. Subscriptions are \$5 a year (bulk order of 5 or more, 25¢ each) from News & Letters, 36 S. Wabash, Room 1440, Chicago, IL 60603. Telephone (312) 236-0799. Fax (312) 236-0725. Periodical postage paid at Chicago, Illinois. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to News & Letters, 36 S. Wabash, Room 1440, Chicago, IL 60603. Articles may be reprinted verbatim if credited to "News & Letters."

**Raya Dunayevskaya**  
Chairwoman, National Editorial Board (1955-1987)

**Charles Denby**  
Editor (1955-1983)

**Olga Domanski, Franklin Dmitryev**, Co-National Organizers, News and Letters Committees. **Terry Moon**, Managing Editor. **Felix Martin**, Labor Editor (1983-1999), **John Alan**, National Editorial Board Member Emeritus.

News & Letters is printed in a union shop. 

News & Letters is indexed by Alternative Press Index.

# Terror and daily abuse for workers

**OAKLAND, CAL.**—Rinku Sen, the director of Applied Research Center, and Fekkak Mamdouh, co-founder of the Restaurant Opportunities Center of New York (ROC-NY) and co-director of Restaurant Opportunities Center United, came to Oakland on a speaking tour for their book, *The Accidental American, Immigration and Citizenship in the Age of Globalization* (Berrett-Koehler Publishing, Inc., San Francisco, 2008).

Rinku Sen pointed out that globalization is incomplete, it exists for corporations only, not for workers. The "free trade" agreements assure the free movement of commodities, but workers face militarized borders, various countries' laws, and visa restrictions to prevent their movement.

Thus while capital flow is supposed to create jobs, workers are prevented from moving to where job opportunities arise. She bemoaned the fact that most of the debate around immigration assumes that interests of U.S. residents are opposed to immigrants' interests.

Fekkak Mamdouh is an immigrant from Morocco. The book describes a little of his life in Morocco, the poverty that forced him as well as his brother to seek jobs abroad; his first immigration to Saudi Arabia, where he worked for a Saudi family as a "guest worker," and then the Saudi family's visit to Florida, which gave him his first taste of life here. But most of the book is about the life and organizing in New York City restaurants. Mamdouh started as a delivery boy, then a bus boy and then a waiter. He explained how lucky he was to make the transition from bus boy to waiter. Many immigrants work for 20-plus years as bus boys.

In 1996 Mamdouh started working at Windows of the World restaurant on top of the World Trade Center. The restaurant had the reputation for being one of the best restaurants in NYC. It had a union contract, although with a no-strike clause. Despite that, the staff got together and refused to work on a Thanksgiving Day, successfully demanding the firing of an abusive manager. Part of this success was due to the staff getting together and breaking down the divisions between the kitchen staff, mostly non-white immigrants, and

the waiters, who are mostly white.

On 9/11/01, 73 workers, mostly the kitchen staff doing the prep work and cleaning, died in the attack. All the rest, 350, lost their jobs. The union could not support them when all were out of work. When the owner of Windows of the World opened a new restaurant after 9/11/01, he refused to hire any of the former employees.

A huge protest in front of the new restaurant changed his mind in the end. Both kitchen and waiter staff as well as customers were outraged that people victimized by 9/11/01 were so badly treated by the restaurant owner. The action attracted media attention. Once the name of the organization, ROC-NY, and contact information were published, lots of people started calling, reporting abuses in restaurants where they worked.

ROC-NY does lots of research to find out what is really happening. Some workers don't get any wages at all, just their share of tips, which is illegal. ROC surveyed 1,000 restaurants and published three reports based on those surveys of kitchen workers. The reports document the discrimination faced in the best of the restaurants. ROC focuses on 4-star restaurants, because they set the tone for others.

ROC wants customers to help, too: if workers don't get sick-time, they have to come in when sick and their germs get into the food being prepared and served. If workers are stressed, worked too hard, they cut their fingers and that gets into the food. ROC's theme is, if we all get together, we can do it, we can change the world.

—Urszula Wislanka

## SEIU march against dictatorial control



**SAN JOSE, CAL.**—4,000 unionists from SEIU United Healthcare Workers-West (UHW) marched on Sept. 6 against SEIU President Andy Stern's undemocratic, top-down dictatorial practice and business unionism. Stern wants to take over the 150,000-member UHW by putting it under trusteeship.

One marcher said, "I'm a Kaiser HMO worker in San Jose. We're fighting for union democracy. We want to have a voice on the job to advocate for our patients in the state of California. This is the core issue through which Andy Stern has awakened a sleeping giant. Stern wanted to remove 5,000 of our members who are home health care and nursing home care workers out of our local and place them in Local 6434, which has lower wages and benefits."

"Stern's appointees signed a contract with nursing home owners that discourages workers from speaking out about dangerous conditions in nursing homes. Stern is creating a corporate union with all power to the top decision-maker."

Another marcher said, "We don't accept Andy Stern as our leader. I thank God for the union but I'm not for the International taking over our union voice from us. What he's trying to do is preposterous. UHW leader Sal Rosselli just started paying attention to us workers in Southern California because he needs us. He says he is for the people, but he's not. When members speak out with their own view, he jumps on them. The Labor-Management Partnership does not work. Management is afraid to be an equal with workers. We have to get back our own voice."

—Supporter

## Iraqi strikes defeat severe wage cuts

Iraqi workers scored an important victory last month. Days of strikes and demonstrations, including electrical workers and oil workers in Baghdad, and cement workers in Sulaimaniya, got the Iraqi government to reverse its order to cut wages by up to 30% and eliminate many benefits. It agreed to pay retroactively the workers' wages that had already been cut. It also agreed to negotiate with workers' representatives over other issues such as work safety.

Even more significant is the agreement to consider passing a new labor law that would respect labor rights in conformity with International Labor Organization standards. This would be subject to Parliamentary debate. Such a law would of course be a great advance over the current situation, in which Saddam Hussein's 1987 anti-union laws are still in effect.

Plans have also been made to hold a large International Labor Conference in Iraq next Feb. 13-14, in Erbil. According to the organizers: "Iraq's labor movement is a force for unifying our nation...Workers represent the majority of Iraqis who do not have any interest in the ongoing terrorist violence. When sectarian gangs have attempted to transfer their conflicts into the ranks of workers, they have been rejected."

## Relentless revolt

**DETROIT**—There are thousands of strikes every year, ranging from the couple of hundred Bronx nursing home employees who go out on strike to get a union, the 27,000 Boeing workers out on strike for increased wages and benefits, West Coast dock workers on strike against the war, the coal miners on strike against unsafe working conditions, to the individual office computer operator who "accidentally" hits the wrong key that erases a whole day, or week, of work that has to be redone.

In a strike situation management has public relations personnel always available to present the company's point of view, which is usually the same as that of the corporate media, while the views of workers are seldom accurately reported. If rank-and-file workers are interviewed, reports are highly selective. Out of ten workers interviewed, nine may be in favor of the strike, and one against it. But when the report appears in the press, there is one voice for and one voice against the strike—all in the name of balance, of course. That is why there is a healthy distrust by workers of the media, especially during a strike.

### STRIKES UNDERCOUNTED

There is no way to know the number of strikes that occur each year in the U.S. According to Bureau of Labor Statistics data, however, there were 21 strikes last year, involving 189,000 workers, compared with 20 strikes in the previous year involving 70,000 workers. But the BLS only counts those work stoppages or lock-outs involving 1,000 or more workers, which means, of course, that the vast majority of strikes are never recorded or reported.

The lowest number of recorded strikes, 14, occurred in 2003. A big turning point was 1982, the first time that the number of strikes dropped below 100. Large-scale strikes have been decreasing ever since. It was a period when the workers were rejecting concessionary contracts and demanding that they be renegotiated, a period when the labor bureaucracy that was preaching cooperation with management began to adopt the point of view of not what the workers wanted, but how many concessions would they be willing to accept.

**In short, it ushered in the open opposition of the labor bureaucracy to the rank and file, all sung to the refrain that "We're all in the same boat." And what workers knew from bitter experience was that when they were in the unemployment lines, they didn't see any company executives there with them.**

And this goes to the heart of the question of strikes, because workers know that they are the ones who create all of the huge profits of the corporations, and that those profits come out of their blood, sweat and tears.

These are all expressions of revolt, revolt against the dehumanizing and alienating labor they must perform that oppresses them and ruthlessly discards them as obsolete things determined by this capitalist system of economics. This is not determined by the greed and cold-hearted nature of the capitalist (although those traits can be present), it is determined by the dead factors of production, and those factors are most powerfully reflected by the bottom line of the financial balance sheet, the profit.

Capital has but one function, and that is to reproduce itself as rapidly as possible by juggling all of the economic factors. The needs and aspirations of individual human beings are totally absent, which is why workers are instinctively in a state of continuous, daily revolt against this system—they must revolt to preserve their own humanity.

The contradictions and crises of this system are manifest in many ways, and at no time more starkly than today. The unemployment rate is at 6.1% nationally, with more than 760,000 jobs lost since the first of the year alone, and sure to grow with the financial crisis we face.

—Andy Phillips

## WORKSHOPTALKS

Continued from page 1

after capital's well-being, requiring decisions on capital's behalf be rubber-stamped. Since his coming to office, Stern has signed one sweetheart deal after another with a variety of managements in the health-care industry, without any oversight or review by the rank-and-file.

### STERN WORKS FOR CORPORATIONS

It's all top-down, according to capitalist prerogatives. They are undemocratic, not because they're evil men. Stern believes as much as Paulson that there is no alternative to capitalism, which is fundamentally anti-theoretical to democracy in our everyday working lives. As one rank-and-file UHW homecare nurse from Fresno said at the demonstration: "Every day I'm there for my clients, the patients I take care of. Stern has these big ideas, but he doesn't take care of the little things. He's only there for his clients, the corporations."

This reminded me of my workplace. What media pundits now call the divide between Wall Street and Main Street has its origins on the shop floor. It is a divide within ourselves as we struggle to accomplish what we really care about. Every day, those of us in the front lines of healthcare try our personal best to take care of the "little things," that is, patients' needs. But, every day, we are up against a huge, seemingly impenetrable barrier when care is made subordinate to budgetary priorities. That makes us alienated from our own work.

### DENYING CARE

For example, every day we have a heavy load of patients coming through our hospital doors, especially through the ER. Every day we meet resistance from the floor managers, who run their wards like a fiefdom, when we try to place these patients. They are obsessed with their budgets above all else. Managers are trained and rewarded according to financial goals, rather than using the budget to meet patient needs, like staffing the wards properly.

Congressional leaders and the Bush administration were shocked by the intensity of grassroots opposition to the bailout. This opposition does not surprise any of us working in the "Labor-Management Partnership," which was Stern's brainchild where I work. He has entered into other official and unofficial partnerships with management across the country, giving up the right to strike or even to report abuses. Stern has bowed to the needs of owners of capital at every turn.

He is telling us workers to sacrifice our hard-won gains to "help U.S. industry compete" in the global economy. Our rank-and-file approach instead has been to focus on a campaign for quality care. We know our own labor is alienated because of the prevailing way of thinking—that life is only possible within the present bounds of capital's irrepressible drive toward self-expansion.

Wall Street and Main Street are no more partners than labor and management can be true partners. There will be no resolution to this conflict until we overcome alienated labor. Workers need to not only work together but we need to do a lot of thinking and discussing about how we get to a new kind of labor.

For more information and to contribute financial support to the February conference of Iraqi unions, see U.S. Labor Against the War: <http://www.uslabor-againstwar.org/>. They are hoping to raise \$150,000.

—Gerry Emmett

## FROM THE WRITINGS OF RAYADUNAYEVSKAYA

**Editor's note:** This is an excerpt from "Capitalist Production/Alienated Labor: This Nuclear World and its Political Crises," Part II of the Marxist-Humanist Draft Perspectives, 1986-87, published in News & Letters, July 1986. The text of the full Draft Perspectives, completed by Dunayevskaya on June 17, 1986, is included in the Supplement to the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection, #11026. This excerpt appeared in The Marxist-Humanist Theory of State-Capitalism: Selected Writings by Raya Dunayevskaya.

The basis of the economy of the most powerful imperialist land, the U.S., is that it is now a debtor nation. The global ramifications of that fact, as well as its implications at home, have not been seriously dealt with. Paul Volcker, head of the Federal Reserve Board, and considered by economists to be the "second most powerful man" in the land, did not bother to attend the [G7] Economic Summit. He refused to be deluded by all the hoopla about the great state of the world economy, especially that of the U.S. Volcker claimed the U.S. "put all the necessary solutions off on other countries. . . . The action taken so far is not enough to put the deficit on a declining trend." The strength of the economy, Volcker concluded, "is not an unalloyed joy."

The Grand Illusion, however, that all capitalist ideologues, including Volcker, have created about this nuclear world with its robotized production, was achieved by them through forgetting that Alienated Labor is the irreplaceable foundation, essence and universal form—the creator of all values and surplus-values. That is exactly what produces both capitalist profits and what Marx called the "general absolute law of capitalist accumulation"—its unemployed army.

**What the industrial giants cannot hear is the death-knell that labor, employed and unemployed, as well as the homeless, are ringing out. The industrialists are under the illusion—never more so than in this robotized stage of production—that the unemployed army can be made to rampage against the employed.**

Their ideologues are busy "proving" that Marx was wrong. They have never understood that other fundamental Marx prediction, that the failure to reproduce labor means the death of their whole system. Political crises reflect the general absolute law of capitalist production differently in different historic periods. Thus, the Great Depression produced a John Maynard Keynes, with his *General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*, which proved to the capitalists that they cannot get out of economic crisis unless they couple production with employment. All kinds of "New Deals" were thereby contrived to save capitalism from revolution.

Today, modern profit-hungry capitalists, both state and private, think they can do the exact opposite—that is, "uncouple" employment from production. They think they can still go merrily on with their computerized stock market, false super-profiteering through mergers, playing the margins, and alternating ownerships from corporations to "private entrepreneurs." They now talk of factory "incubators," where former large plants are leased out to small producers who employ far fewer workers at far lower wages. They act as if higher labor productivity can come from somewhere other than sweated, living labor; as if it can come out of computers.

The favorite word of today's economists is "uncoupling." Peter F. Drucker has written for *Foreign Affairs* (Spring, 1986) on "The Changed World Economy."<sup>1</sup> There, he arrogantly, and yet in an off-hand manner (as if the changes he is talking about are the true status of the world economy), insists that it is necessary to recognize the three truths of the uncoupling that he elaborates:

1) "uncoupling" employment from production.  
2) "uncoupling" capital from capital investment, reducing capital to money by calling it "capital movement": "Capital movements rather than trade (in both goods and services) have become the driving force of the world economy. The two have not quite come uncoupled, but the link has become loose and, worse, unpredictable."

3) "uncoupling" industrial production from the whole economy, by which he tries to explain that he means uncoupling it from the "weak" sectors like the farm economy and raw materials. It is as if digging out the raw materials is done without labor. Or, for that matter, as if our so-called post-industrial world is so "advanced" with its computers, its plastics, its synthetics, its "high technology," that labor which is not on a production line is not labor.

What they choose to disregard is that even those robotized, unimated<sup>2</sup> production processes are built on sweated labor. A recent NBC television special<sup>3</sup> on that most high-tech land, Japan, which has completely shaken up the global market, revealed how fully its production is rooted in the most wretched, low-paying, non-union, piecework labor, done by subcontractors for its high-tech corporations.<sup>4</sup>

Indeed, all of the ideologues are rightly screaming against the astronomical indebtedness of the capitalist economy since Ronald Reagan has been in power. There is no way that even Reagan can deny that we have

# Capitalist Production / Alienated Labor

become a debtor nation. What the ideologues (who supposedly differ from the supply-siders and monetarists) have to recognize is this: once they have "uncoupled" industrial production from their whole economy, and capital from investment in production, reducing capital investment to money alone, they are left with what they supposedly rejected—monetarism.

These are not mere stock market fantasies; the monstrous reality they have created is a land in which at one pole we see a thousand new millionaires, while at the other we see the pauperization of millions of the unemployed, of the homeless, of the masses of Blacks and women living so far below the poverty line that Hunger stalks the richest land in the world.

**Once capital is not tied to investments in production, once even trade has been "uncoupled" from trade of products and reduced to mere exchange of services, there is nothing left but an exchange of monies and investment for more monies. The reason that the U.S., though itself a debtor nation, is nevertheless still at the top of the heap is because the international capitalists feel safe in only one country—the counter-revolutionary Reagan's USA. It is not only "flight capital" leaving "unstable" lands that gets to the U.S.; Japan and West Germany have "invested" heavily here as well.**

Let's take another look, then, at the "safe" U.S. and all of Reagan's victories in his ongoing counter-revolution at home against unions, against Blacks, against women, against the youth.

• It is true that the union bureaucracy has given too many concessions. But one look at Hormel's ongoing strike shows that militants know how to fight their own leaders, as well as the capitalists.

• It is true there is no ongoing General Strike. But if we count up all the "little" strikes from Minnesota to Chicago, from New York's sweatshops to California farmworkers, and every place in between, we will see

that U.S. labor is in daily, unrecorded revolt.

• It is true that the Women's Liberation Movement has seen a retrogression of all its hard-won gains of the 1960s and 1970s. But anyone who thinks that the sudden mass demonstration of 100,000 in Washington, D.C., on March 9 was "just" against Reagan's stand on abortion has not heard the voices of the Black and white women who have made their rejection of Reaganism known on every front from housing to childcare and from affirmative action to freedom of choice—and that is not the question of abortion alone, but the passion for human relations.

• It is true that the youth today are not the youth of the 1960s. But, as we have seen, the internationalism that was present in the anti-Vietnam War movement has reached a new dimension. Nor can one rewrite the history which has proved that the two-way road of the Black dimension between Africa and America has never separated its struggles from its ideas of freedom, its search for a philosophy of revolution.

The Black masses see right through Reagan-Weinberger's "conceptual arsenal," as the ceaseless nuclear arming and genocidal imperialism that it is. The utter barbarism of the Holocaust is what shows us where this post-World War II world of capitalism-imperialism is heading.

**The significance of the new, the concrete, is not only the general fact that these struggles and crises point to the need to uproot the system. The significance is that this new form of production, which Drucker and others tout, is hiding the essence, by creating the illusion that this Particular, this specific appearance, is the new Universal. It is necessary to work out the new and concrete forms as they appear. That does not mean merely saying that it is only form rather than essence. Rather, it is to see that only revolution can abolish these forms; that only revolution can abolish the illusion some Marxists have that these forms are the new Universal. This kind of transformation can be achieved only by the dialectic of Absolute Method.**

As Hegel articulated it:

To hold fast the positive in *its* negative, and the content of the presupposition in the result, is the most important part of rational cognition; also only the simplest reflection is needed to furnish conviction of the absolute truth and necessity of this requirement, while with regard to the *examples* of proofs, the whole of the *Logic* consists of these. [*Science of Logic*, Vol. II, translated by Johnston & Struthers (New York: MacMillan, 1929), p. 476; trans. Miller (London: Allen & Unwin, 1969), p. 834.]

Karl Marx projected his concept of the positive that would follow only after the old capitalist society was thoroughly uprooted:

In a higher phase of communist society, after the enslaving subordination of individuals under the division of labor, and therewith also the antithesis between mental and physical labor, has vanished; after labor, from a mere means of life, has itself become the prime necessity of life; after the productive forces have also increased with the all-round development of the individual, and all the springs of co-operative wealth flow more abundantly—only then can the narrow horizon of bourgeois right be fully left behind and society inscribe on its banners: from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs! (*Critique of the Gotha Program*; see Marx's *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, p. 871.)

The positive in the negative was not—*was not*—that Alienated Labor under capitalism is the human activity, much less that science is the human activity. Rather, it was the *struggles* of the Alienated Laborers against capitalism, and the laborers' passion for an actual unity of mental and manual labor, that spells out the urgency of revolution.

What the revolutionary theoreticians need to do is *listen* to the voices from below, and *concretize* that new unity by *practicing* it in their own publications, activities, relations, as they prepare for revolution, anticipate it, labor for it. The absolute opposite of that is what oozes out from the ideologues under capitalism—which is why Marx called them the "prizefighters" for capitalism.

To confront the economic crisis, read

## The Marxist-Humanist Theory of State-Capitalism

by Raya Dunayevskaya

The book that shows how state-capitalist theory

- is needed to understand today's crisis
- is indispensable to get back to the humanism of Marx—the basis for a new, human society
- is, however, insufficient without the philosophy of Marx's Humanism

From "Today's Epigones Who Try to Truncate Marx's Capital":

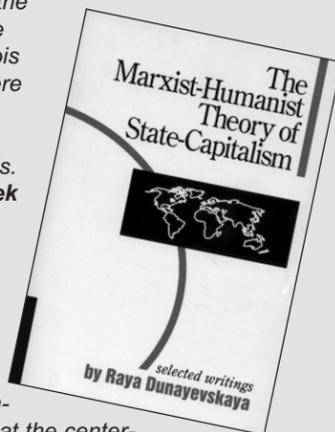
Marx's greatest theoretical work, *Capital*, has once again marched onto the present historic stage even among bourgeois ideologues, since there is no other way to understand today's global economic crisis. Thus, *Business Week* suddenly started quoting what Marx was saying on the decline in the rate of profit as endemic to capitalism.

Even bourgeois economists understand that the centerpiece, the nerve, the muscle as well as the soul of all capitalist production is labor—the extraction from living labor of all the unpaid hours of labor that is the surplus value, the profits—and that, therefore, neither the market, nor political manipulation by the state, nor control of that crucial commodity at this moment—oil—can go on endlessly without its relationship to the life-and-death commodity: labor-power.

From "New Beginnings That Determine the End":

Consider, then, the irony of the new divide among the Left, caused by the fact that not only do some still consider "nationalization of the means of production," "State Plan," "collectivization of agriculture"—no matter if the workers have no power whatever—as "socialism"; but even some who focused on the phenomenon that the first workers' state was actually transformed into its opposite—a state-capitalist society—still consider it only as a Russian phenomenon, or, at most, Stalinism. In truth, Stalinism is but the Russian name for a world stage of capitalist development that private, competitive capitalism had to give way to with the onset of the Depression.

Only \$8.50 plus postage. See page 7 to order



<sup>1</sup> See also the *Special Report* on "The Hollow Corporation" in *Business Week*, March 3, 1986.—RD

<sup>2</sup> "Unimation" (for "universal automation") refers to use of industrial robots in manufacturing.

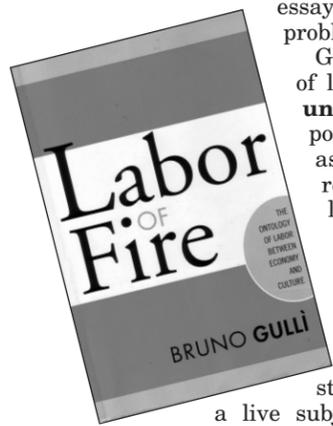
<sup>3</sup> "The Japan They Don't Tell You About," April 22, 1986, *NBC White Paper*.

<sup>4</sup> Back in the early 1940s when Plan, with a capital "P," was the rage among the Left, the first study of the Five-Year Plans of Russia by those working out a State-Capitalist Theory debunked the Plan as any kind of socialism, showing that "feudal" Japan, in the very same 1932-37 period, was outproducing "socialist" Russia. [See Raya Dunayevskaya's original 1942 study of the Russian economy, included in *Marxism and Freedom, from 1776 to Today* (Humanity Books, 2000), p. 233, and p. 358, footnote 220.]—RD

# Gulli approaches but avoids Marx's new dialectic of labor

by Ron Kelch

Bruno Gulli's *Labor of Fire: The Ontology of Labor between Economy and Culture* (Temple UP, 2005) ascribes to Marx, specifically the 1844 *Manuscripts* and the *Grundrisse* (Marx's draft notebooks for *Capital*), "a radical ontology of labor," in order to show "at least at the level of theory that other and better worlds are indeed possible" (p. 6). Gulli's "ontological labor" means labor before it is specified in any determined form. This "immediate being" (p. 87) of labor, as living creative human activity that is one with life, is the **negative** of any actual labor which is always mediated by social relations like slavery or capitalism. This is an important work because this approach reflects the influence of the existentialist philosopher Martin Heidegger—an influence that is widespread in contemporary theory among both Marxists and anti-Marxists (poststructuralists). This essay will show why that is a problem.



Gulli calls for "the return of labor to itself" (p. 9) as **undetermined**, "creative power," which he rightly asserts can never be reduced to productive labor under capitalism. There living labor becomes productive labor only insofar as it becomes "objectified labor," meaning labor is only "the substance of capital" but not a live subject. This substance is value in things, which, as capital, becomes dead labor or machines, dominating living labor, and confronts the worker as an "alien power" (p. 84-86).

From this perspective Gulli takes sharp with those like Moishe Postone who claim Marx had no trans-historical concept of labor outside of capitalism. This led Postone to see the potential for liberation, not in the laboring subject's return-to-self, but in "dead labor" or capital. In a like manner, says Gulli, post-modernists like Jean Baudrillard deny there is any universal concept of labor apart from capitalism. In place of overcoming capitalism through the negative power of labor returning to itself, there is the theorist's radical critique.

Does Gulli measure up to Marx's negative power of labor returning to itself, which Gulli says has a "Hegelian origin" (p. 9)?

## GULLI'S VS. MARX'S DIALECTIC

Claiming a confirmation of his ontological perspective in Marx's 1844 "critique of Hegel's dialectic," Gulli writes: "one of the most important moments of this critique has to do with Hegel's concept of negation (negation of the negation), which Hegel presents as the absolute positive, but which Marx calls a 'false positivism,' to which he counterposes Feuerbach's concept of the positive in itself" (p. 27).

**On the contrary**, in rooting his dialectic in labor, that is, the whole, corporeal human being, Marx distinguished it **both** from Feuerbach and from the false positivism of Hegel's disembodied dialectic even as Marx singled out Hegel's "negation of the negation...as the true and only positive, and from the point of view of negative relation inherent in it as the only true act and spontaneous activity of all being..."\* (*my emph., RK*). For Marx, our full humanity hinges on this "dialectic of negativity as moving and creating principle." He calls it Hegel's "outstanding achievement" which "conceives the self-creation of man as a process, conceives objectification as loss of the object, as alienation and as tran-

scendence of this alienation ... grasps the essence of *labour* and comprehends objective man—true, because real man—as the outcome of his *own labour*" (CW, 3:332-3).

## ESSAY

The **only true positive** is a **process** of double negation. Firstly, both human natural capacities and nature, taken as givens, are negated through externalizing or objectifying of those capacities in nature, transforming both nature and expanding human capacities. Secondly, this external reality is negated through a negative **self-relation** that recognizes human social and material reality as the result of its own labor and as the ongoing expansion of human capacities.

In place of this realized and recognized movement of labor, Gulli foresees a "movement whereby becoming nears being" (p. 148) where, again "being" is indeterminate labor in its "immediacy" (p. 88). Gulli says labor and art have to merge as one, but this is merely approached, never attained. In contrast, Marx's *Grundrisse* directly poses creative labor that doesn't reproduce itself in "any determined form" as post-capitalist labor of the future when there is the "absolute working out of...creative potentialities, with no presupposition other than the previous historic development, i.e. the development of all human powers as such the end in itself...in the absolute movement of becoming" (MN, p. 488).

## GULLI VS. MARX'S CAPITAL

In Marx's dialectic of becoming, a new freedom emerges not so much **from** but **through** the negation of **specific** determinations that alienate the ongoing self-expansion of innate human capacities. In contrast, Gulli poses purely ontological, indeterminate free creative power as the negation of capitalist productivism. Gulli claims *Capital* is "problematic," accusing Marx of equating "living labor with productive labor" (p. 84) because Marx says "*productive labour*" is itself "*socially determined*" (BF, 1043).

*Capital*, in contrast to Marx's draft in the *Grundrisse*, traces capitalism's socially determined concept of productive labor in specific workers' struggles. The laborer **embodies** the contradiction between abstract, value-producing labor and concrete living labor. In *Capital* Marx's theory is neither ontological nor a debate with other theoreticians, but is united with practice in a new way. Thus, Marx's concepts of how ever more surplus value is extracted from workers—relatively through the introduction of machinery or absolutely through a longer working day—are inseparable from engagement with living laborers, and the theory inherent in their struggles against the domination of the machine or for a normal working day in a "protracted and more or less concealed civil war" (BF, 412) in production. The movement to a universal concept of labor is **through** the kind of labor that is specific to the capitalist epoch as distinct from merely counterposing labor as a form of indeterminate and universal condition of existence.

## CAPITAL AND MARX'S DIALECTIC

In *Capital*, Marx's concept of the "fire of labour" that imparts "vital energy" to nature in creating use-values is a "nature-imposed condition of existence...common to all forms of society in which human beings live" (BF, 289-90). However, inextricable from this condition of human existence is another one, which is that this universal metabolism with nature is, as Gulli himself puts it, "always socially determined" (p. 83).

Gulli reiterates Antonio Negri's summary of the *Grundrisse* on method, as that which "seeks the real in the concrete" through a "determinate abstraction" (p. 80). What Gulli and Negri, who both prefer the *Grundrisse* to *Capital*, ignore is that Marx in *Capital* began anew with the "determinate abstraction" of capitalism he had by then **found**.

The "real" determinate abstraction of capitalism is the commodity-form through which the objects of human creation, commodities and capital, dominate their creators by presenting themselves objectively as values, or socially necessary labor time in things. Relations between commodity producers "appear as what they are," that is, "as material relations between persons and social relations between things" (BF, 166). This determinate abstraction, which **inverts** social and material reality, shapes all bourgeois thought. Though Gulli writes, "labor that returns to its immediacy... becomes the subject (i.e., the ground and agent) of a new determination of the concrete" (p. 88), for Marx, a "new determination of the concrete" can emerge **only** through freely associated labor, a new mediating form of directly social labor, where each one freely expends her distinct form of "labor-power in full self-awareness as one single social labor force" (BF, 171).

Gulli's ontological approach avoids the critical movement **through** the **historically specific** way productive labor is socially determined under capitalism. Gulli makes productive labor itself into that which dis-

tinguishes capitalism from creative living labor, which for him is "*neither-productive-nor-unproductive*" labor (p. 85). For Marx, recognizing how productive labor and value-producing labor are not equivalent is one of the distinguishing marks of a "new determination of the concrete" **beyond** value production, which **falsely** presents itself as much of a "self-evident and nature imposed necessity as productive labor itself" (BF, 175).

Material necessity is always an "inconvenient truth" when the social power of labor develops under the blind necessity of value production. This is palpable whether one speaks of the disregard today for the material necessity of human life in the global hunger that stalks much of the world's poor and the care of the planet as the very foundation of life, or the fact that in Marx's time capitalism used up three generations of workers in one before workers won a normal working day.

## A NEW BEGINNING IN FREEDOM AND NECESSITY

A new dialectic of freedom and necessity emerges through freely associated labor's appropriation of the social power of labor, creating a clear differentiation between, and unity of, two aspects of necessity, social necessity and material necessity. The results of labor then reflect back, not a socially necessary labor time in things, but the human-created world and its material limits. In Vol. 3 of *Capital*, Marx distinguishes between post-capitalist freedom achieved in the realm of necessary material production and the "development of human energy which is an end in itself, the true realm of freedom." Marx adds that the true realm of freedom "can blossom forth only with this realm of necessity as its basis. The shortening of the working day is its basic prerequisite" (CW, 37: 807).

Rather than following the path to a non-capitalist future through Marx's historical development of a new dialectic of freedom and necessity, Gulli sees the return of labor to its ontological self as a new form of artistic-social labor that is an end in itself. The problem for Gulli is **how to achieve this worthy goal**. Gulli makes an important criticism of the mere slogan "Another world is possible" when that is not made "philosophically . . . immediately evident" through "determining the specificity of the new world to come" (p. 184). However, his ontological approach to the future avoids Marx's specifically determining that future in



Marx addressing the 1864 Congress of the First International

his journey from the *Grundrisse* to *Capital*. Raya Dunayevskaya made a unique contribution when she traced the significance of this journey in *Marxism and Freedom* (see especially chapter 5, "The Impact of the Civil War in the United States on the Structure of *Capital*").

Gulli's posing of the inter-merging of art and labor remains a leap. He himself recognizes the "problem" that "the work of art also appears as a commodity" (p. 183) and that "...an esthetic regime requires that everybody be socially and existentially able to explore and actualize his or her creative potential. And in order to do this, one has to have time for it" (p. 151). In the *Grundrisse* Marx had **already** addressed how a post-capitalist shortening of the working day realizes the true realm of freedom through a **new** kind of **productive labor**: "the saving of labour time [is] equal to an increase of free time, i.e., time for the full development of the individual, which in turn reacts back upon the productive power of labour as itself the greatest productive power" (MN, p. 711).

To get to a new society, we cannot skip over Marx's tracing the course of human development from value production to when the productive power of labor is a human attribute instead of an attribute of capital. In *Capital* that future begins from a new relationship between freedom and necessity out of negating the commodity-form's inversion of social and material reality, an inversion which blocks living labor's ability to return to itself in an ongoing realized and recognized transformation of nature and human nature.

\* Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works* (International Publishers: New York), Vol. 3, p. 329. Further references to Marx will have "CW" with the volume number and page number in the text, except for the commonly used Ben Fowkes translation of *Capital*, (London: Penguin, 1976), which is referenced with "BF," and the Martin Nicolaus translation of the *Grundrisse* (New York: Vintage, 1973), which is referenced with "MN."

How to contact	
NEWS & LETTERS COMMITTEES	
<b>CHICAGO</b> 36 South Wabash, Rm. 1440 Chicago, IL 60603 Phone 312 236 0799 Fax 312 236 0725 <b>MEETINGS</b> Call for Information	<b>FLINT, MI</b> P.O. Box 3384, Flint, MI 48502 <b>MEETINGS</b> Write for Information
<b>DETROIT</b> P.O. Box 27205 Detroit MI 48227 <b>MEETINGS</b> Sundays 2 p.m. Write for information	<b>NEW YORK</b> NYNewsandLetters@gmail.com Phone 914-462-3691
<b>LOS ANGELES</b> <b>MEETINGS</b> Sundays 6:00 p.m. Echo Park United Methodist Church 1226 N. Alvarado (North of Sunset, side door)	<b>OAKLAND</b> P.O. Box 3345 Oakland, CA 94609 510 658 1448 banandl@yahoo.com <b>MEETINGS</b> Contact for information
<b>MEMPHIS</b> 1910 Madison Ave, PMB 59 Memphis, TN 38104 memphisnlc@gmail.com	
INTERNET	
<b>Email</b> arise@newsandletters.org	<b>WORLD WIDE WEB</b> www.newsandletters.org

**NEWS & LETTERS**

Take part in the creative power of revolutionary journalism

Subscribe and write for *News & Letters* just \$5/ year (see literature ad, page 7)

## THE CAPITALIST WORLD IN CRISIS

You can put lipstick on a pig and it's still a pig. It follows then that you can put lipstick on a Capitalist Pig and it remains a Capitalist Pig. In the excellent Aug.-Sept. *N&L* Lead on the criminalization of undocumented workers in a meat processing plant, you can see there is plenty of sugarcoating going on to protect the bottom line. The workers are getting roasted.

**N&L Fan  
Chicago**

\*\*\*

Bush, surrounded by the neo-conservatives who represent the rich class, pushed for the lifting of tariffs between nations, calling it globalization, despite the fact that globalization has been prevalent since Karl Marx, in his economic analysis, said that the capitalist has the whole world as his market. It was to win over and reduce the resistance of the masses that the neo-conservative economists called the lifting of tariffs "globalization."

As a result, the blue collar workers—from the U.S. to Spain—are gutted out of what have been converted to service economies. The capitalists need production expansion to save themselves from a decelerated rate of profit, as shown by Raya Dunayevskaya in *Philosophy and Revolution*. The bubble of the real estate speculations burst in Spain as in the U.S. Unemployment rates jumped to 11.2% in Spain and over 7% in the U.S. It has all resulted in a class of workers with salaries that do not reach to the end of the month either in Spain or in the U.S. The laid off workers of the giant marketing firm Quatel, which laid off 120 employees in Salamonica alone, were chanting in Plaza Mayor, "No more salary that reaches only to the 20th of the month! No more hunger."

The conservative think tankers failed Marx 101 where they should have learned that it is production that drives the market, not the reverse. The economic crisis is a production crisis. The average man in the street understands the problems much better than the economists.

**Correspondent  
Spain/Los Angeles**

\*\*\*

Calling the bailout of Wall Street "socialist" is outrageous. There is nothing socialistic about government intervention to save private capitalism. It is known as state-capitalism. Marx was quite clear that to move to socialist or authentic communism it is necessary to break the power of capital. The power of capital resides in the fact that under its rule labor is first of all a commodity, and only secondarily a creative human activity. Changing the way we work is the key to a socialist or humanist society. Property forms—private or state—are not the key of liberating social transformation.

**Journalist  
Latin America**

\*\*\*

I work at an accounting firm and the reality of this financial crisis is sinking in for me. There's been concern since the credit crunch hit last year but in the past few days I've had to prepare

detailed financial statements for many clients at the request of their banks. The lenders are desperate to know about the debts that are out there. It isn't a pretty picture. What I've found means one construction firm will be going out of business. At least one person will be losing her home. I can imagine the whole economy getting out of control, which is scary. One "funny" thing is that the bank that holds my mortgage bought up the bank that holds my credit card debt. It's like watching dinosaurs eat each other. It's a dangerous situation.

**Hardworking CPA  
Chicago**

\*\*\*

While the press has extensively covered the Wall Street meltdown they pay little attention to what it means to the American worker. The working people are being hung out to dry. And neither of the candidates seems to give a damn. Obama's financial advisers are those who maneuvered bailouts during the Clinton years. The real question for me is where does it leave labor, the unions? I haven't seen much movement and protest. We can't manufacture it but we have to discuss the fact that organized labor won't find any solutions posed by Congress or the candidates. The only road needs to be an alternative to the capitalist speculative game-playing with the lives of working people. Only a recreated labor movement can begin to deal with this crisis. It has to begin to discuss the total bankruptcy of this system.

**Revolutionary  
West Coast**

### WHAT HAPPENS AFTER?

Dunayevskaya is unique in linking the question of what happens after revolution to what she calls two kinds of subjectivity. What others reject as belonging to a pre-technological age, she sees as concrete for our time, when counter-revolution weighs so heavily on revolution that, to many even on the Left, no alternative to capitalism seems viable. A pathetic example is Barbara Ehrenreich's piece for *The Nation* on the 160th anniversary of the *Communist Manifesto*. Her conclusion? "I'm hoping that capitalism survives this one, if only because there's no alternative ready at hand." Seeing no alternative is just the other side of the coin of not hearing the second kind of subjectivity coming from below, and therefore being unable to work it out in theory either.

**Environmentalist  
Memphis**

\*\*\*

Failed revolutions, like the one in Nicaragua that Terry Moon wrote about last issue, do show how important it is to take up the question of what happens after revolution today. That the Sandinistas could be in power for 11 years and ignore the thousands of deaths caused by their draconian anti-abortion law that they refused to change is a stark reminder of how nationalist revolutions, or revolutions that just change the leadership, don't bring women's freedom.

### SUPPORT ZOLO AGONA AZANIA!

Zolo Agona Azania is facing the death penalty after 25 years on death row. Now a prolific writer and accomplished artist, at the time of his arrest for the shooting death of a policeman, Zolo was a well-known activist in his hometown of Gary, Indiana. Since his arrest Zolo has fought the charges against him, often from death row. Indiana Circuit Court Judge Steve David wrote in a May 2005 decision: "fundamental principles of fairness, due process, and speedy justice" were violat-



ed in Zolo's case. Zolo's victories, overturning his death sentence twice, have set precedents cited by other prisoners.

The jury on Oct. 20 will be presented with the stark choice of the death penalty or Zolo's release.

Support Zolo by writing to Lake County Prosecutor Bernard A. Carter at Building 'B' 1st Floor, 2239 Main St., Crown Point, IN 46307.

**Hondo  
No Death Penalty for Zolo Committee**

# READERS' VIEWS

Nothing proves more starkly how right Raya Dunayevskaya was when she wrote that though social revolution comes first, "revolution cannot be without Women's Liberation or behind women's backs, or by using them only as helpmates."

**Women's Liberationist  
Chicago**

\*\*\*

Gerry Emmett's article in the last issue on "War in Georgia: dangerous new world," was excellent, and the kind of analysis that reveals the meaning of events. I especially appreciated where he went back to look at the "real lesson of Kosovo," and showed that what is at issue is a "crisis of vision" of the Left. That the idea of freedom is always involved is revealed by the fact that Russia's support of a national liberation movement in Georgia has given new hope to Russia's own oppressed minorities, including the Bashkirs and the Tatars. Russia, by raising the question of freedom, may just get more than they bargained for.

**Marxist-Humanist  
Chicago**

### THE ANGRY ELECTORATE

I've seen a palpable anger expressed by my non-political friends towards Bush, McCain and Palin this election. Some were doing research, looking into other than mainstream media—editorials from lesser known magazines, papers from other countries, internet blogs. The most explosive discussion was at the salon where I was getting a haircut and someone brought out an email she received that urged women to vote against Palin with a subject line that read, "Do you know what women went through to win the right to vote?" There were pictures of women who were jailed, beaten, sent to insane asylums. It was passed from one to another and men getting their hair cut in another area came back to see what all the noise was. Many complained they had never learned any of this history from school. When I offered a more radical perspective nobody asked "how do I join?" but everyone was really listening this time. It was an amazing discussion. What I am wondering is whether such enormous discontent will stop, or grow, with the declaration of a winner after the election.

**School teacher  
Illinois**

### FROM THE ARCHIVES

It was fascinating that the talk that Dunayevskaya wanted to give to students and activists in Japan in 1966 was on Hegel, and Hegel straight. She was in Japan at a time when the Left there was booming. The almost revolution in France 1968 was yet to happen, and the incredible student movement and women's liberation movement both flowing out of the Black struggle for freedom in the U.S. were just beginning. It is as if she knew that the revolutionary year, 1968, would not lead to actual revolution, but to retrogression. She was warning us all of the need to work out the new unity of theory and practice and pointing to the fact that that can't be done without delving into philosophy.

**Feminist  
Memphis**

\*\*\*

At the News and Letters "Silence the Violence" forum in Oakland, a young Black woman said one way she stays connected to her community is by going to church every week. She also said that there was no point in waiting for God or the government to stop the violence in Oakland or anywhere else. She told the audience that people would have to come together and do something about it.

I was reminded of Raya Dunayevskaya's archives column in the Aug.-Sept. *N&L* where she pointed out that even though Hegel was a Christian he found that Spirit could not stop at Religion to achieve its fullest development—it has to go to Philosophy. Christianity had articulated that "man as man is free." Thus Hegel, just as the young woman, understood that God may very well exist but humanity is not thereby absolved of the responsibility to shape and carry out its own destiny.

**Participant  
Oakland**

### VANGUARDISM

The place of a vanguard in the broader movement is still a serious question in my mind. I can see pros and cons in having such an entity. My roommate at graduate school considers himself a Vanguard Socialist; however, he doesn't believe that a classless society is really possible. He supports a broad range of civil rights, but thinks people don't know what to do with political rights and tend to do wrong things with their ability, however limited, to make political decisions.

I would have preferred reforms within the Communist Party in the former Soviet Union rather than have it fall apart the way it did. One of the major "turning points" in its downfall centered around the Kronstadt Rebellion. As many have said, it seemed to have lost its way soon after the end of the civil war.

Let me know a good place to buy some of Raya Dunayevskaya's books.

**Student of the Left  
Mississippi**

\*\*\*

*Editor's Note: All of Dunayevskaya's major works are available from News and Letters. To order see p. 7. See especially p. 4 this issue for The Marxist-Humanist Theory of State-Capitalism.*

### N&L AND 'THE LEFT'

Thank you for the sample copy of *N&L*. What I find particularly noteworthy is the combination of worker-news-based and intellectual-theory-based contributions. This provides quite an original contrast with many left papers that either function as mere "advertising sheets" for their own organizations, or keep theory out of their mainstream papers altogether and reserve it for internal bulletins or specialist magazines.

One criticism is that I found little mention in regards to the rest of the Left. As you can see from looking at the *Weekly Worker*, the CPGB has its primary focus on the rest of the workers movement as a view towards reconstituting a mass party. It can give the appearance of approaching the issue from the "top down" or of attempting to articulate theory outside of practice. However, I feel it is simply a reaction to the dire straits we find ourselves in and the need to keep our own house in order before we can really view ourselves as a party as opposed to just another sect. Unfortunately, I did not see this in *N&L*, which makes me curious as to your approach to the rest of the Left.

That criticism aside, I would like to see the *Weekly Worker* adapt more of *N&L*'s style in regards to grassroots news articles and concise theory.

**New Subscriber  
Britain**

**AMERICAN CIVILIZATION ON TRIAL AGAIN**

The Lead in the Aug.-Sept. *N&L* "U.S. criminalizes undocumented" called the ICE raid in Postville "near police-state actions." What was "near" about it? What shocked people as new was the scale and preparations for it, converting a cattle fairground into a detention center. Have we forgotten the notorious examples of using cattle railroad cars for prisoners condemned *en masse*? The legal framework for a police state is there already with the PATRIOT Act and FISA. What might hold it back is the power of popular opinion. They need to demonize the victims as "illegal" to prevent support for them. This drumbeat from the Right is a response to the May Day 2006 general strike.



**Former Polish Citizen California**

\*\*\*

The *New York Times* has noted the similarity of immigrants' stories to stories Marx quoted in *Capital*. What Marx did, however, was not just tell the workers' stories, but "transform historic narrative into historic reason."

**Marxist California**

\*\*\*

Raya Dunayevskaya described our age as an age of absolutes—either absolute destruction or absolute liberation. I used to think that was overly dramatic but now I see it as the simple truth. One young Latina at the immigrant rights march in Oakland this year said, "We need a system not based on money but on human dignity. These are human beings, families torn apart and we want to make them whole." Her subjective ideas are objective.

**March supporter Oakland**

\*\*\*

The "police-state actions" the Aug.-Sept. Lead points to are not the actions

of a Maoist or a Stalinist state but more along the lines of Milosevic's specific singling out the Bosnian Muslims and the Kosova Albanians, the Hutus against Tutsis, or the Zulu tribal districts singling out Malawian and Chadian undocumented laborers. They are all part of the phenomenon of demonization of an Other.

**One of the Others California**

●

**CAMPAIGN VIOLENCE**

During the Republican Party Convention the police were determined to smash both the protests and any independent press coverage. Both Amy Goodman, one of the most incisive journalists in the U.S., and an AP photographer were among the first arrested. In addition, police with firearms drawn raided a meeting of the video journalists' group I-Witness and arrested independent media, bloggers and videomakers. As protests arose Goodman and others were quickly released.

**Watchdog New York**

\*\*\*

I went to Denver to challenge the Democratic Party convention because I don't believe they are much better than the Republicans. The most they offer is a reform here and there and there is no reforming this system.

**Youth San Francisco**

●

**THE OLYMPICS AND 'POLITICS'**

The Black/Red column on "Olympics and capitalist crises" (Aug.-Sept. *N&L*) reminded us about the horrific events in the 1972 Munich Olympics where a seven gold medal record was set by Mark Spitz. The 2008 Olympics is characterized by the attempt to shut "politics" completely out of the picture. While lip service is paid about the ideals of the Olympics, the event is carefully controlled by the IOC and the various world governments to be about national

image, status, commercial leverage and ultimate assigning of rank among various nations. Sort of like a class system among nations. The old men in the IOC decide the Olympic order and condemn any political statements by the young athletes, while the entire event is about politics and power. (As it happened, another horror started while the opening ceremony was going on in Beijing—a war between Georgia and Russia.) I wonder if the Olympics form of competition would be viable in a world where domination on either an individual or a national level would no longer be tolerated.

**Michael California**

●

**A WAR RESISTER VICTORY?**

The Federal Court of Canada granted a stay of deportation to Jeremy Hinzman, the U.S. war resister described in my article on the resisters in the Aug.-Sept. *N&L*. No date was set for a decision on whether the court will hear the appeal, but it is very good news and somewhat unexpected. What is heartening is the support being given by resisters from the Vietnam War.

Much now rests on the Oct. 14 federal election. Both the Liberals and the NDP are firmly on record in support of the resisters staying in Canada. While the polls have shown a possible Tory majority, the numbers are volatile. The growing strength of the Green Party has created a new variable, and there has been talk of a Liberal/NDP coalition government.

**Veteran Anti-War Activist**

●

**REMEMBERING PAUL NEWMAN**

Besides being a wonderful actor and beautiful human being who quietly and creatively donated millions to those in need, what I honor Newman for was how high he ranked on Richard Nixon's "enemies list." In fact, his name was on the original list of enemies produced by Nixon aide Charles Colson in 1971.

Colson's notes on the memorandum read: "Paul Newman, California: Radic-

lib causes. Heavy [Eugene] McCarthy involvement '68. Used effectively in nationwide T.V. commercials. '72 involvement certain." According to internal memos, circulated in the White House prior to the 1972 election, the list was made up of "liberal politicians, labor leaders, business titans, academics, activists and an actor" who might be a threat to Nixon's re-election. Happily, Newman survived and Nixon was driven from office.

**Newman Fan Chicago**

●

**REMEMBERING HIROSHIMA**

I appreciated the articles on "Remembering Hiroshima" and "No new Nukes" in the Aug.-Sept. *N&L*. The Bush administration's recent move to install a Missile Defense system in Poland, as a threat to Russia and others in the area, brought to mind the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, which brought the world close to a nuclear holocaust and a probable Nuclear Winter.

Maurine Doerken's book *One Bomb Away* makes a convincing argument for the abolition of the nuclear industry and against the drive of both President Bush and Senator McCain to build 125 new nuclear bombs each year as well as a new generation of nuclear power plants. The book is available through [www.onebombaway.com](http://www.onebombaway.com) or by calling AWOL.INK 1-310-238-0304.

**Japanese-American reader Los Angeles**

●

**'FACTIONALISM'**

To my Comrades at the Bellows: To paraphrase William Shakespeare, from Julius Caesar, Act IV:

*"There is a tide in the affairs of men and women, Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;*

*Omitted, all the voyage of their life Is bound in shallows and miseries."*

The breaking-off of a faction is a shallow misery. We must be prepared for the flood.

**Your Comrade Battle Creek, Mich.**

**SELECTED PUBLICATIONS FROM NEWS & LETTERS**

**BOOKS**

By RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA

- Philosophy and Revolution: from Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao**  
30th Anniversary issue, 2003 .....\$24.95
- Marxism and Freedom, from 1776 until Today**  
2000 edition. Foreword by Joel Kovel.....\$24.95
- Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution** 1991 edition. New author's introduction. Foreword by Adrienne Rich .....\$24.95
- Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution: Reaching for the Future** (Special: Includes shipping)....\$10
- The Power of Negativity: Selected Writings on the Dialectic in Hegel and Marx**  
by Raya Dunayevskaya.....\$24.95
- The Marxist-Humanist Theory of State-Capitalism: Selected Writings by Raya Dunayevskaya** .....\$8.50
- The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism: Two Historic-Philosophic Writings by Raya Dunayevskaya**  
Contains "Presentation on Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy of June 1, 1987," and 1953 "Letters on Hegel's Absolutes" .....\$3 paperback, \$10 hardcover

By CHARLES DENBY

- Indignant Heart; A Black Worker's Journal**  
1989 edition includes Afterword by Raya Dunayevskaya.....\$14.95

By KEVIN ANDERSON

- Lenin, Hegel, and Western Marxism: A Critical Study**  
First full-length treatment of Lenin's studies of Hegel....\$15.95

**PAMPHLETS**

- Bosnia-Herzegovina: Achilles Heel of Western 'Civilization'** (Expanded edition).....\$5
- Kosova: Writings from News & Letters, 1998-1999** .....\$3.50

- American Civilization on Trial** Black Masses as Vanguard. 40th anniversary edition, by Raya Dunayevskaya, and
- Dialectics of Black Freedom Struggles** Race, Philosophy & the Needed American Revolution by John Alan  
Each \$8, Special: Both for \$15, including postage.

- Explorations in Dialectical and Critical Theory**  
From Hegel to Derrida and from Marx to Mészáros .....\$5
- Marx's Capital and Today's Global Crisis**  
Includes critiques of Ernest Mandel and Tony Cliff.....\$2
- Myriad Global Crises of the 1980s and the Nuclear World since World War II**  
by Raya Dunayevskaya.....\$2
- Nationalism, Communism, Marxist-Humanism and the Afro-Asian Revolutions**  
by Raya Dunayevskaya .....\$1.25
- Voices from within the Prison Walls**  
by D. A. Sheldon. Prisoners' views of (in)justice system and organizing from within. ....\$8  
For pamphlet plus donor copy for a prisoner.....\$16
- The Revolutionary Journalism of Felix Martin (Isaac Woods)**.....\$8
- Working Women for Freedom**  
by Angela Terrano, Marie Dignan, and Mary Holmes .....\$2
- Dos ensayos por Raya Dunayevskaya**.....\$2

**ONGOING REVOLUTIONARY HISTORY**

- The Coal Miners' General Strike of 1949-50 and the Birth of Marxist-Humanism In the U.S.**  
by Andy Phillips and Raya Dunayevskaya.....\$2
- America's First Unfinished Revolution: the untold story of the true creators of independence—workers, yeomanry, Blacks and women**  
by M Franki and J. Hillstrom.....\$2
- On the 100th Anniversary of the First General Strike in the U.S.**  
by Terry Moon and Ron Brokmeyer .....\$2
- Free Speech Movement and the Negro Revolution**  
by Mario Savio, Eugene Walker and Raya Dunayevskaya ...\$5

- News and Letters Committees Constitution** .....42¢ postage
- Marxist-Humanist Literature Catalog**  
A full list of publications (includes many not listed here) available from News and Letters Committees.....59¢ postage

**ARCHIVES**

- Guides to Collection and Supplement to the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection: Marxist-Humanism: A Half Century of Its World Development**  
Full description of 15,000-page microfilm collection ....\$4.50
- The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection—Marxist-Humanism: A Half Century of Its World Development**  
A 15,000-page microfilm collection on 8 reels available from Wayne State University, Detroit, MI 48202.....\$165

**NEWSPAPER**

- News & Letters subscription**  
Unique combination of worker and intellectual published 6 times a year. (Request information about gift subscriptions.).....\$5/year
- Bound Volumes of News & Letters**  
1970-77,1977-84,1984-87,1987-94, 1994-99 .....\$30 each  
*N&L* is also available on microfilm from Pro Quest, 300 Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48106. *N&L* as well as other Marxist-Humanist literature is available on audio tape.

**Mail orders to:**

*News & Letters*, 36 South Wabash, Room 1440, Chicago, IL 60603, Phone (312) 236-0799

Enclosed find \$\_\_\_\_\_ for the literature checked. Please add \$2 postage for each pamphlet, \$4 postage for books. Illinois residents add 7% sales tax.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

## Silence the Violence

# Oakland youth speak out

**Editor's note:** On Sept. 28 the Bay Area News and Letters sponsored an open ended discussion on what revolutionary change means with several Black youth in Oakland who are part of Silence the Violence, a project of the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights. Below are excerpts from their comments.

My name is **CHUCK WEST** of Silence the Violence campaign. We go out on the streets, trying to do something about the violence in Oakland, California. This is the first time for me to speak in front of everybody like this. I got into the campaign when I noticed the violence spiral in Oakland, a lot of my friends getting killed. I saw the power of music to do something about it.

**FRANCEYEZ:** When I was 13 I was hungry. I was on the street early. I wasn't caring too much about what was going on in the world. About three years ago I enrolled myself in high school and came to the Covenant House [a center for homeless youth]. I realized there was something I need to do, I need to make a change. Us here together now have really proved how strong we are as human beings. Once you find out what your purpose is in life you are a human being. You are a being with a place here on earth. That is what a revolution is for me: to understand what we are, who we are, what it is that we need to do.

**QUEEN DEELAH:** I've been a youth activist in Oakland for about eight years. I got involved with a music community program called Kids First. It provided a space for me when, as a young person, I felt there was so much more that people could be doing. I felt the things I wanted to do for my city were not being done, and what I had to say was being overlooked. Out of that came Silence the Violence campaign. What it does is takes the plan that I have as an individual for Oakland and helps me carry it out. I feel that the revolution is being bold, standing out and being different. Being different can get you killed in this area, it's very risky to stand up and stand out and have a voice. This is what we on this panel represent, we are the bold ones, we are out there on the street every day. People can see: here we are, here is our music, here is our message. That's what a revolution is, being bold, being out there. In comparison to the past movements we are not as visible. The churches are not out there, the revolutionaries are not out there, letting us know this is where you go. We feel ignored. We're being told: no, no, no. Even the things we create we're told are wrong. Where do we go as young people? Without hope, without a place to turn, it's no wonder youth turn to violence. We know where the drugs and the guns come from and who brings them into the community. But who is willing to talk about that? If we do, where is the system to protect us? It takes all kinds of organizations, beyond color bounds,

beyond religion. People need to stop cracking down on young people as though we have created this system. The system cracks down on us. They blame hip-hop as though it's the problem. It is not the problem. The root of the problem is the system that created the situation we find ourselves in. It's going to take a human society to un-teach the bad things we have been taught.

**DIAMOND:** We didn't create the problem, but we need to come up with the solutions. The revolution is not comfortable. During the Civil Rights Movement, I am sure it was not comfortable to walk across those bridges and face the dogs and the water hoses, but they did what they needed to do. Our time is different. We fight for environmental justice and human rights for all. We have to come together in unity and use our power, even our power to vote. A lot of our youth are being locked up, are steered to drugs. We need to overturn three-strikes laws.

**AFRICAN-AMERICAN AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Are you the height of the fight for equality? Back in the 1960s there was talk of revolution. I feel that is where you are now.

**FRANCEYEZ:** Yes, obviously. The elders in the room can compare this generation to when they were our age. A group called WAR said, "Think. It ain't illegal yet." If you are able to think, to move forward in your mind as you create and make actions happen, you won't be complacent, you will move forward. Since the 1960s, that's four generations, four different decades, four different types of people. Us here, as children of parents that lived through those times, we are here to make that change. We have to. If not, who is going to do it for us?

**DIAMOND:** It's about the future. It's not only about this right here, right now, it's about our future. Through a green economy we can create jobs to lift people out of poverty.

**CHAOS:** For me, Silence the Violence is a light and a door to the world. We pay for wars, we pay for destruction of ourselves. Silence the Violence is more than just about gun violence. There is gun violence, psychological violence, mental violence, abuse violence, there is domestic violence, environmental violence. When I speak on Silence the Violence I speak of all those. I am not anti-anything, except I am anti-government. You can talk about change all you want, but you have to **support** it, this is the only way that it is going to happen. Like the sister said, it is important to vote, but at the end of the day, what matters is the **individual's** thought, it goes back to you. If you want to change something, change the community that you're walking in every day. That's what I mean by revolution. I've been studying the revolutions of the past four decades. I am studying history, because you won't know where you're going if you don't know where you're coming from.

## Afro-Colombians convene for rights

From Oct. 1-4, 2008, nearly 100 different groups, including national advocacy organizations and community councils, will be represented in Tumaco, Colombia, at the First Assembly of Black Community Councils of the Colombian Southern Pacific Region. They aim to build solidarity across the region and create collective ways of participating democratically to resist the daily violence that confronts Afro-Colombian communities. They face systematic displacement, arbitrary detainment, killings and massacres.

The Assembly announced that they will convene "toward a consolidation of territory with autonomy and self-government" in the face of state, paramilitary and guerrilla aggressions founded on racism and systematic marginalization that targets Black communities in Colombia. They write, "Despite the situation generated by the armed conflict internal to the country, the Black communities resist annihilation and we continue a permanent labor to recreate life, self-affirmation, and [libertarian] identity inherited from our ancestors."<sup>1</sup>

In 1993, Colombia instituted Law 70, which recognized the right of Black Colombians to collectively own, occupy, and live on their ancestral lands. The law was ratified in order to "establish mechanisms for protecting the cultural identity and rights of Black Communities of Colombia as an ethnic group and to foster their economic and social development..."<sup>2</sup>

According to a 2007 University of Texas School of Law Rapoport Center report, almost 15 years later Law 70 has not been upheld by the Colombian State. "[I]ts realization has been hampered by a number of obstacles, including pervasive systemic discrimination"<sup>3</sup> as well as the infiltration of Afro-Colombian lands by agro-export businesses, tourism mega-projects, and targeting by paramilitary violence—for which the state offers no protection.

While Afro-Colombians are a small fraction of Colombia's population, they make up about two thirds of Colombia's four million internally displaced, and remain among the poorest. Furthermore, 119 Afro-Colombian civilians were killed and another 98 injured in 2002 at Bojayá, one of the worst massacres in 40 years. Despite organizing efforts to demand justice,

U.S. military funding through Plan Colombia and violence between factions in Colombia's internal war means the massacres, disappearances, and forced displacement of these communities are still rampant.

The Assembly plans to meet at a time when the Bush and Uribe Administrations are colluding to pass the U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement, which would allow further violence against Afro-Colombian communities in the name of economic expansion. Already, Afro-Colombians must deal with paramilitary forces who perpetrate violence against their communities and allies. For example, in Curvaradó (Chocó), paramilitaries have "violently and illegally usurped" Afro-Colombians' land, and specifically, the paramilitary "Black Eagles" have threatened members of the Inter-Church Peace and Justice Commission, a human rights organization that works with Afro-Colombian community council leaders to ensure "that these territories are fully and justly returned to their rightful holders."<sup>4</sup>

To join others in signing a declaration of solidarity with the First Assembly of Black Community Councils of the Colombian Southern Pacific Region, go to <http://www.petitiononline.com/FABCCSPR/petition.html>.

—Heidi Andrea Restrepo Rhodes

<sup>1</sup> "Toward a Consolidation of Territory with Autonomy and Self-Government" statement of First Assembly of Black Community Councils of the Colombian Southern Pacific. ([pacificosur152008@gmail.com](mailto:pacificosur152008@gmail.com))

<sup>2</sup> See Law 70 of Colombia (1993): In Recognition of the Right of Black Colombians to Collectively Own and Occupy their Ancestral Lands. English Translation. April 2007. Translated by: Dr. Norma Lozano Jackson and Dr. Peter Jackson. Benedict College, Columbia, SC 29204. Retrieved at <http://news.afrocolombians.com/news/?sectionid=11>.

<sup>3</sup> See "Colombia Memo, Afro-Colombian Human Rights: The Implications for U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement." The Bernard and Audre Rapoport Center for Human Rights and Justice. University of Texas, Austin. <http://www.utexas.edu/law/academics/centers/humanrights/publications/Colombia.html>.

<sup>4</sup> See Sept. 4, 2008, "Urgent Action URGENT ACTION! Human Rights situation in Curvaradó is worsening," <http://news.afrocolombians.com/news/?sectionid=8>.

## Mumia update



Monday, October 6 the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear arguments for a new trial for Mumia Abu-Jamal, framed for killing Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner. Mumia's attorney, Robert R. Bryan, filed a Petition for Writ of Certiorari with the Court alleging that witnesses were persuaded by the prosecution to testify against Mumia. In July, the federal appeals court refused to reverse the Third Circuit Court's March decision to deny Mumia a new trial.

Later this year, however, Bryan plans to bring the issue of racism in Mumia's case before the Supreme Court.

—Elise

## BLACK/REDVIEW

Continued from page 1

interest of the immense majority. The proletariat, the lowest stratum of our present society, cannot stir, cannot raise itself up, without the whole superincumbent strata of official society being sprung into the air." Marx extended the meaning of this when he wrote an Address for the First International to President Lincoln congratulating him on his election: "While the workingmen, the true political powers of the North, allowed slavery to defile their own republic, while before the Negro, mastered and sold without his concurrence, they boasted it the highest prerogative of the white-skinned laborer to sell himself and choose his own master, they were unable to attain the true freedom of labor, or to support their European brethren in their struggle for emancipation, but this barrier to progress has been swept off by the red sea of the Civil War."

**THE EMANCIPATION OF African Americans** from the bondage of slavery awakened in the consciousness of white labor that it itself was not free labor. Thus, after the Civil War, there was a nationwide struggle for the 8-hour day... Marx reorganized his greatest theoretical work, *Capital*, on the basis of the Eight Hour Movement which swept the U.S....

What we can't lose sight of is the way Marx tightly tied his analysis of the objective development of capitalism in a global context to a new freedom reaching beyond capitalist reality—the new revolutionary subjectivity of the proletariat. In this way he anticipated the revolutionary explosion throughout Europe in 1848. What that means for today is to challenge the sense of estrangement from the masses that infects many intellectuals today.

For example, the Black brain trust at Harvard University posed an historic riddle in a series of interviews Henry Louis Gates conducted for *Frontline*. Professor Gates...interviewed a ghetto youth of today. The youth, who survives by hustling in the streets, expressed total contempt for the dead end McJob future this capitalist society offers. Instead of seeing reason and a critique of the whole past practice of the movement in this new L.A. Rebellion generation, Gates reflected how distant he felt from this youth. According to Gates he might as well have been from "Mars." We need Marx's understanding of the dialectics of revolution in the *Communist Manifesto* to overcome this estrangement.

*Struggles in Steel*, a documentary film, tells the story of the 25-year struggle of African American steel workers in hazardous, low paying jobs throughout the years of the Civil Rights Revolution. And then, after these Black workers won their court battles using civil rights legislation, they found out that their jobs had evaporated due to the restructuring of steel production and world-wide competition. *Struggles in Steel* ends in the late 1980s with dynamic images of the destruction of one steel plant after another and unemployed Black steel workers standing on the dismal streets of steel towns contemplating their bleak future. These Black steel workers struggled to overcome alienation in production—a struggle inseparable from the Civil Rights Movement. Their victory also led them to discover that capitalism's process of accumulation can completely pull the rug out from under you.

...**THE TASK FOR TODAY** is not retraining of African Americans to adjust to technological changes in production. The story of the steel workers shows that technology in this society is used as a weapon against the movement when it achieves new gains....The 1965 Watts Rebellion which preceded the 1992 L.A. Rebellion by over 25 years...was reaching for a new universal of freedom. It was reaching for a concept of freedom that didn't stop with new particular gains. To reach such a new universal not only calls for recognizing the subjectivity of the Black masses but also the need to unite theory with their practice in a new way. Recollection of the persistence of the Black revolt is a way to realize, first in our minds and then in the world, that the idea of freedom doesn't stop but is in the ongoing process of determining itself.

—May 3, 1998

# U.S. pushes Pakistan into abyss

The massive truck bomb that exploded Sept. 20 at the Islamabad Marriott hotel, killing more than 50 and injuring over 250, is the most recent manifestation of the many-sided political violence shaking Pakistan. It threatens the ruling powers and, more importantly, endangers the authentic mass social protest movement that brought down the decade-long authoritarian rule of Pervez Musharraf. The Pakistani cauldron includes: an armed Pakistani military and intelligence service that supports and attacks the Taliban fighters it itself founded in the 1990s; Islamic extremists waging war on both sides of the Pakistan-Afghanistan border; and self-aggrandizing/manipulative civilian political leaders maneuvering over state power. Within that cauldron, the Bush administration has chosen to take its "war on terror" to a new level.

## U.S. TROOPS IN PAKISTAN

The *New York Times* reported in September that "President Bush secretly approved orders in July that, for the first time, allow American Special Operations forces to carry out ground assaults inside Pakistan without the prior approval of the Pakistani government." The first known assault involved more than two dozen Navy Seals spending several hours on Pakistani soil, possibly killing militants, but also civilian bystanders. The Pakistani government and military protested the secret assault, even though Pakistan's military at times works hand in glove with U.S. CIA and military officials. In late August, for example, a meeting was held on a U.S. aircraft carrier in the Indian Ocean attended by Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Muller together with Gen. Ashfaq Parvez Kayani, the chief of staff of the Pakistani Army.

U.S. political-military-economic interference in Pakistan dates back to Russia's occupation of Afghanistan in the 1980s. The U.S. supplied billions of dollars, at first to arm Afghan fighters against Russia. Later, in 1994, Pakistan created the Taliban to intervene in the civil war that raged in Afghanistan after the Russian withdrawal. Taliban training camps, some no doubt funded by U.S. dollars, became poles of attraction for Islamic militants.

Then came 9/11/01 and everything changed. Or did it? Musharraf joined Bush's "war on terrorism," and billions more U.S. dollars flowed in. At the same time the Pakistani military and Inter-Services Intelligence agency played a double game. They took U.S. money and arms while launching selected attacks against Taliban fighters on their territory and, at the same time, gave help and free rein to other Taliban who crossed the border to launch attacks in Afghanistan.

After 9/11/01 the U.S. considered Pakistan "its" territory, not only for launching war in Afghanistan, but as a target itself. For several years the U.S., under CIA operations, has used Predator aircraft to fire missiles in Pakistan at suspected militants. The result has been many civilian casualties, particularly in the tribal areas. There is a growing resentment by the Pakistani masses against the U.S., both for the U.S.-NATO continued military occupation of Afghanistan seven years after the U.S.'s first invasion, and for the U.S.'s military-political manipulations within Pakistan, particularly its nine-year-long support of Musharraf's authoritarian rule.

## WHAT ABOUT PAKISTANIS?

This helped create a mass protest against Musharraf that intensified with Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry's principled stand against him. Tens of thousands of lawyers and supporters marched in the streets after Musharraf dismissed Chaudhry, helping

## EDITORIAL

to develop a mass protest movement which led to the end of Musharraf's rule. It was one of the few times in the last decade when the voices and actions of the Pakistani masses could be heard and seen.

Are the hopes and desires of the Pakistanis to be again diverted in face of the reckless, endless "war on terror"? The U.S. is playing a dangerous game with Pakistani lives. On the one hand, it maneuvered with Musharraf and the "democratic" parties time and again; the latest being U.S. support of the new president, the corrupt Asif Ali Zardari, who inherited leadership of the People's Party after its leader Benazir Bhutto was assassinated. Treating the party as her private property, Bhutto's will gave her husband Zardari control. With Musharraf removed, Zardari reneged on his agreement to restore Chaudhry to office, no doubt fearing the possibility of corruption charges.

On the other hand, and even more dangerous, the U.S. is playing with fire with the Taliban in Pakistan. The Pakistani Taliban is conducting its own war within, even as it is supported by elements of the Pakistan military in its other war in Afghanistan. In one tribal region of Pakistan the Taliban recently burned 130 girls' schools. Many of the recent suicide bomb attacks and the assassination of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto last December have been attributed to the Taliban. Now we have the horrific massacre at the Marriott hotel in Islamabad.

Not satisfied with its nine-year support of Musharraf's authoritarian rule, the U.S. is continuing its seven-year war of occupation in Afghanistan, and escalating its military attacks against the Taliban and Al Qaeda in Pakistan. In truth, the U.S. escalation is paving the way for an unstable, chaotic Pakistan to fall into the abyss by opening the door wide for Islamic fundamentalism. It may well lead to a war on the people of Pakistan. Are their hopes and desires for freedom and peace to be smothered by "the war on terror"?

## QUEER NOTES

By Elise

The weekend of Aug. 16 witnessed the first ever Gay Pride Parade in India including a protest of sodomy laws and calling on Britain to apologize for enacting them during its rule over India. Sodomy laws are regularly enforced and those found guilty can spend up to 10 years behind bars. The protesters may find encouragement if India's Supreme Court does hear a case challenging such laws.

\* \* \*

Lesbian Guadalupe Benitez cannot be denied in vitro fertilization (IVF) because the California Supreme Court ruled that medical care is a civil right no matter a person's sexual orientation. Doctors attempted to deny Ms. Benitez the promised IVF treatment due to their fundamentalist religious beliefs that gay and unmarried partners having children is immoral.

\* \* \*

A memorial to the 50,000 GLBT victims of the Holocaust, unveiled in Berlin in May, was vandalized in mid-August. Concentration camp survivor Rudolf Brazda said, "To see such a thing today after all the suffering and horror we had to go through, it is cruel," and Christian Democrats (a conservative group) member Frank Henkel commented, "This cowardly and shocking act is an attack on the image we have of ourselves as a tolerant and open city" (*The Advocate*, Aug. 20, 2008). Germany continues its investigation.

## Community rallies against brutal cops

**MEMPHIS, TENN.**—On June 12, a videotape was leaked showing another egregious act of police brutality—a transgendered Black woman being beaten by a white officer in the lobby of the Shelby County Jail. A second officer held the woman down while the first put on a pair of latex gloves and beat his victim with handcuffs used as brass knuckles. At no time did the victim engage in any violence.

I'm involved with the Mid-South Peace and Justice Center and the Women's Action Coalition. We called a meeting on June 18, which drew over 70. We drafted demands for officer sensitivity training on LGBTQ issues, public disclosure of alleged cases of brutality, and independent oversight of the Memphis Police Department. Because the police attacked the victim in the jail lobby—where they knew they were being videotaped—we knew this incident pointed to a broader pattern of abuse. We also wanted an investigation of:

- the Shelby County Sheriff's Office, as several Sheriff's Department employees can be seen loitering in the background of the videoed beating.

- the county medical staff because the nurse on the scene ignored the injured woman. She suffered lacerations on her head and face and had mace sprayed in her eyes. Instead, the nurse "treated" the officer's "injury"—a scrape on the back of his neck.

We decided to convene a public forum for victims of police brutality to share their stories with the community and to demand accountability.

We met throughout the summer, including meeting with the officer in charge of the police academy, who promised that he would pass our concerns along to Larry Godwin, Director of the Memphis Police Department. We won't accept a mere four hours of sensitivity training, lumping in LGBTQ with issues of gender,

race, etc., given only to new recruits. Tellingly, however, that officer has since been embroiled in a sexual scandal, so he has not been pursuing our demands.

Godwin first claimed to welcome independent oversight, then denied any need for it in interviews later. Approaching the City Council about passing a resolution for an external investigation of the Memphis Police Department's human rights policies and practices, we found a vocal ally in Councilwoman Janis Fullilove. She even came to one of our community meetings to offer her support and put us in touch with the director of the Citizens' Law Enforcement Review Board (CLERB).

An "independent oversight" for the Memphis Police Department, CLERB has been stifled by various factors, including the fact that its charter only permits it to review investigations that have already been made by the MPD's Internal Affairs Bureau. A bureaucratic nightmare awaits citizens who want to make claims against the Memphis police. First, a citizen must file a report with the IAB. If the IAB refuses to investigate, as it most often does, there is no further recourse. The CLERB has no government resources and only one paid staff person, and has no right to enforce its findings. There is not one case of the police acting on a CLERB recommendation.

In August, Fullilove sponsored a resolution before the Memphis City Council calling for an external investigation of the Memphis Police Department and asking for a strengthened CLERB to provide citizen oversight "with some teeth," as she puts it. The resolution passed the first of three readings. The long work of ridding the Memphis Police Department of corrupt and abusive officers has just begun, but our group is happy that our initial attempts have been somewhat successful.

—Amy

## Persecution of Roma

In April 2008 members of neo-fascist political parties won the general election in Italy. The previous government had already begun anti-immigrant programs, especially focusing on the Roma, often known as "gypsies," but the new government promised to take them to a new level.

In 2007, Roma were forced into squalid settlements called "solidarity villages," but the new administration has started closing these down in an attempt to force the Roma to leave the country. The Interior Minister, Roberto Marroni, has initiated a program of national registration and fingerprinting the Roma, even if they are Italian born (and some families have lived in Italy for centuries) or have passports.

Emboldened by the attitudes of the government, a local mafia group, the Cammora, has committed dozens of attacks on settlements, chasing the Roma out of their homes with iron bars and torching the settlements. Maroni's response to these atrocities was, "that's what happens when Gypsies steal babies." It is a commonly believed urban legend that the Roma kidnap babies, then distract people by throwing the babies at them in order to steal from them. Another minister, Umberto Bossi, stated "The people do what the political class isn't able to do."

In May, a woman accused a Roma girl of trying to kidnap her baby. In response, vandals burned down a settlement in the Ponticelli neighborhood outside of Naples, and both adults and children were seen hurling Molotov cocktails. Firefighters and police officers stood by and watched, keeping the fire only from spreading away from the settlement.

In another incident in June, two teenaged Roma sisters, Christina and Violetta, drowned while at Torregaveta beach. Some commentators brought up the possibility of foul play since the sea was rough and the girls did not know how to swim.

There has been resistance. Roma groups have held demonstrations wearing the black triangles that the Roma had been forced to wear in Nazi concentration camps. Members of anti-racist groups have sent their own fingerprints to the Interior Ministry. Catholic and Jewish human rights groups have condemned the actions of the Italian government, and so have religious officials, even the Pope. A petition can be signed at <http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/stop-ethnic-cleansing-of-Roma/index.html> demanding stronger political censure from the European parliament and the EU as well as the formation of a Crisis Management Committee. It is important for citizens of the world to learn about this very disturbing situation and to put pressure on the Italian government as well as other governments that have been persecuting the Roma.

—A. H.

## Critical Resistance 10

On Sept. 26-28, several thousand former prisoners and activists gathered at the Critical Resistance 10 conference in Oakland, Cal. In a dizzying number of workshops, activists discussed how to abolish the prison-industrial complex. At one workshop, called "Caged Mental Health: Strategies for Resistance in Women's Prisons," a former prisoner spoke to the solution being the firmest solidarity between and with prisoners.

There is no mental health in prison. You are encouraged to take psych meds to anesthetize the sadness of being separated from your loved ones.

Every living thing wants to be free. Being confined in prison is damaging to the human spirit. The damage displays itself in many forms. For example, it is impossible to make even the simplest decisions: Where should I eat? Should I leave for an appointment at 8:00 or 8:15? People may not understand this indecisiveness; it sometimes leads to arguments even with your loved ones.

In prison there was always a reminder of who was in control of our lives. Although I constantly resisted the oppressive environment, the damage done to me is real. When I was in a halfway house, the staff constantly reminded us that if we do anything wrong, we will be sent to prison again. The fear of returning to prison made it hard to function. I remember having gone out to run errands. I knew I had to be back at 4:00 for an appointment. I thought I turned back in plenty of time, but the traffic was heavy, the bus didn't come on schedule and I was getting late. The fear of being sent to prison for being 5 minutes late for a meeting made me physically ill. When I got back, I had to reschedule the appointment, because I was not well.

To deal mentally and emotionally with the reality of prison, I kept busy. I was totally involved in school, I especially remember a holistic health class. I practically lived in the vocational training building. I learned as much as I could about computers and software. I was active in the Muslim community and in my work. Yet no matter how much I did those things, I still felt the pain of prison confinement. Every few months I would cry myself to sleep and share with a friend how I cannot "do another day." At those times, my sisters helped to get me through another day. We had each other, and we still do.

What gives prisoners hope? You can't imagine how important it is to know people "out there" have not forgotten you; it's cause to keep hoping. As much as possible, use your mind: plan an event, register for any class available, read, etc. Having a relationship with God can also help. And you have to believe that one day you will leave that place.

Thank you for supporting your loved ones and family inside women's prisons. We need you and we love you.

—Hamdiya Cooks

Director of California Coalition for Women Prisoners

# Bailout can't save capitalism from its own gravediggers

Continued from page 1

statism vs. free market—revealing themselves as identical, was how that identity made so many political ideologues look like deer caught in the headlights.

In spite of the public outrage, both presidential campaigns, the extremely lame duck President Bush, and leaders of both political parties in Congress lined up behind passing a bailout in the name of saving the "real" economy or "Main Street" from Wall Street's excesses.

Presidential candidate John McCain, a long-time fervent backer of banking deregulation, who, a day earlier, was telling the Fed to get out of the business of bailouts, lined up behind the super bailout even as he repeated that the underlying economy was fundamentally strong. This was so out of touch with the reality of workers increasingly faced with losing their homes, jobs and health care, McCain suddenly lost ground in the polls after he had pulled ahead of Barack Obama through an ad campaign of blatant lies and appeals to racism. Obama gave cautious support for the Treasury Secretary's power grab, appearing with a line of his own financial experts, including Clinton's Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin, also a former Goldman Sachs Co-Chairman, and former Fed Chairman Paul Volcker.

Feeling the heat from their constituents, the House failed to pass the bill by 12 votes. Four days later, the Senate, where only a third are up for re-election, passed a new bill adding another \$110 billion in spending and tax cuts, which then made it through the House and was immediately signed by President Bush.

## NATIONAL DEBT IS WORKERS' DEBT

This colossal sum, on the scale of the cost of the Iraq War, will be added to the already exploding annual budget deficits now running over \$500 billion. At the birth of capitalism Karl Marx noted that the national debt is the only part of the national wealth truly owned by the workers. The national debt has been a pivotal instrument of state-capitalism's despotism over workers, especially over the last two and a half decades. President Reagan started exploding the deficit through military spending in order to starve the gains in the social safety net workers had won after WWII. Obama has already intimated that the bailout will necessitate scaling back some of his spending plans.

In the U.S., workers have been falling further and further behind with a concentration of wealth at the top in the last three decades of globalization and restructuring comparable to the era of robber barons of the 19th century. Under deregulation, demanded by Wall Street bankers like Paulson, the share of profits flowing to the financial sector of the economy increased from 10% to 40%. In 2006 Wall Street bankers gave themselves \$62 billion just in bonuses.

The American consumer was then continuously hailed as the reliable "hero" of the world economy, but that was at the cost of going deeper in debt. The U.S. savings rate is now effectively zero, the lowest among developed nations. When the Fed turned on the cheap money spigot to keep the economy up through a real estate bubble, mortgage debt exploded under the sales pitch that home prices would always rise. Many workers used their biggest asset—the homes in which they live—to survive, to pay today's exorbitant education costs and medical emergencies. It all collapsed when home prices retreated. The foreclosure crisis, now at 10,000 per day, continues unabated. Vacant foreclosed houses blight whole neighborhoods along with modern day "Hoovervilles," tent cities set up by the new homeless, which are springing up throughout the U.S. For those workers a new Depression has already begun.

Capitalists have learned from the 1930s to keep the system of global finance capital flowing at all cost. What is so crucial about finance capital, and why now does it require an economic czar with unprecedented

state power to save it from its own implosion? As our April-May editorial put it after the then-unprecedented \$30 billion bailout of "too big to fail" Bear Stearns:

"Finance capitalism, 'uncoupled' from production, feeds the illusion that profit can come from speculative bubbles. At the moment of reckoning, the truth asserts itself: that profit only comes from extracting ever more surplus value or unpaid hours of labor from workers. The real vital function of the system of finance is divvying up the loot from all the sweated, alienated labor extracted in labor-intensive manufacturing locales like India, China and Vietnam, as well as what remains in the U.S."

## CRISIS DEEPER THAN LIQUIDITY

This financial crisis brings into sharp relief the U.S.'s status as the world's largest debtor nation. The tremendous loss of paper profits brings new tension between different centers of capital when they divvy up the shrinking pot of loot extracted from workers. The Chinese government, which could still teach U.S. capitalists a thing or two about combining authoritarian state control and a free market, quietly dropped a bombshell in a state newspaper in the face of what they called a "financial tsunami" emanating from Wall Street. The Chinese state-capitalists, who for now continue to buy much of the U.S. debt, are looking for a way to move away from the U.S. dollar as a global currency and for a global "financial order no longer dependent on the United States."

A crucial function of state-capitalism in a globalized economy is to discipline workers according to the needs of free-moving global capital. In one country after another, world financial bodies to which those countries have been indebted have been forced into structural adjustments that have cut social spending. The U.S.'s colossal indebtedness and the failure of the dollar to hold its value against other currencies threaten its privileged position in the global system of finance capital. This will bring even more pressure to bear against any expansion of social benefits in the U.S.

The Fed may have learned from the banking mistakes of the 1930s to immediately address liquidity problems, but the intractable problem of unemployment in the Great Depression, reflected also in today's global unemployed army, has much deeper roots than liquidity. Marx's prediction that the rate of profit tends to fall because of unemployment—a failure of capitalism to reproduce its source of value, alienated labor—comes alive at different crisis points.

Great Depression economists had to confront the need to couple the economy with employment. However, New Deal programs, which ameliorated severe hardship, never really succeeded in bringing the economy out of the Depression. It was the global human disaster of WWII, which also destroyed a vast amount of global capital, that was the basis for restarting the

process of accumulation with a relatively unscathed U.S. as its center.

By the mid-1970s, after Europe and Japan rebuilt their economies with the then latest technology, there was a global recession and an era of low growth. Once again, economists rediscovered Marx's prediction of a falling rate of profit.\* Capital's remedy was massive restructuring of the global economy, moving manufacturing to low cost nineteenth century conditions of labor. This restructuring has run into its own internal barrier with the present crisis as a watershed.

## TIME FOR DOING AND THINKING

The U.S. economy has eliminated over 760,000 jobs in the last nine months. In February the unemployment rate was 4.8%. It steadily climbed to 6.1% by August. Many more U.S. workers will join the global ranks of an unemployed army who are already "ill-housed, ill-clad, and ill-nourished" and **rebellious**. (see "World Food Crisis stirs revolt" June/July N&L). With its failure to reproduce alienated labor, Marx said, capitalism produces its own gravediggers.

However, labor doesn't move with the kind of expeditious class solidarity capitalist rulers have shown in this crisis. There is always a lot of thinking and struggle before labor presents its own collective response in what appears to be mass spontaneity. There are a lot of small strikes against capital's continuous demand for takebacks like the recent three month strike of 3,650 workers at American Axle that ended in a UAW sellout. Nurses and other health care workers continue to strike over working conditions that diminish quality care and for universal health care. Immigrant labor, now under near police state repression, showed its vitality and crucial place in the U.S. economy in a massive strike in May 2006.

Trying to stir opposition in their own direction, nearly all politicians expressed their "outrage" while claiming there is no alternative to saving capitalism and showing "bipartisan" solidarity with capitalists when the whole economy is at risk. This crisis revealed how rapidly objective events can call the whole capitalist system into question and generate a lot of action and new thinking about what is possible. Past failures surely show that the opposite of alienated labor is not to be found in statist intervention, political parties or trade unions, all of which broker on capitalist ground. At this crucial moment of capital's reorganization, it is important to engage that rethinking with Marx's concept of what it would take for humanity to break with being organized under the rule of capitalist production's alienated labor.

\* See "Today's Epigones Who Try to Truncate Marx's Capital," Sept. 21, 1977, in *Marx's Capital and Today's Global Crisis* by Raya Dunayevskaya. (To order see page 7.)

## U.S. plots with right wing in Bolivia

Right-wing forces in several departments (regions) of Bolivia, under the guidance of reactionary governors, began a campaign of destruction and mayhem after Evo Morales' government got overwhelming support in an August nationwide referendum (see Aug.-Sept. N&L). Attacks on federal government offices and human rights organizations were designed to intimidate and terrorize supporters of Morales, who chose not to respond immediately.

Who did respond were thousands from Bolivia's social movements, particularly Indigenous *campesinos* and urban activists. They took to the streets, even in departments with a right-wing voting majority, to defend the Morales government against this attempted "civic coup." For the moment they have halted the right-wing offensive, but the cost has been high.

On Sept. 11 a thousand men, women and children from the tropical department of Pando were on a march toward the capital, Cobija, to protest Gov. Leopoldo Fernández's attempt to take over the city and airport. They were met by assassins/paramilitaries, most probably organized by the governor, who murdered 30 marchers. "This was a massacre of farmers; this is something that we should not allow," said one of the protesters. Only then did Morales declare a state of siege and send troops into the department.

Ever since Morales' election as president, U.S. Ambassador Philip Goldberg has been encouraging the reactionary rebel governors. His response to their organized terrorism, which occurred after the Presidential and governors' referendum, was not to condemn it, but to travel to the region for more conspiratorial meetings. The Morales government reacted by expelling Goldberg.

Are we seeing here actions similar to U.S. behavior in Chile in the period leading up to Salvador Allende's overthrow on Sept. 11, 1973? If a civic coup did not work, can a military coup a la Pinochet be ruled out? The U.S. has developed so many contacts in the Bolivian military, one cannot have confidence that it will continue to back the government.

The departmental governors are in full opposition to the scheduled December vote on the newly drawn-up constitution. The new constitution would give the state more control over the economy and national resources, instead of the separatism the governors demand, but give autonomy to Indigenous communities. It lays out a mixed economy of private, public and communal industries.

The Bolivian government, as in Venezuela and now Ecuador, is seeking to transform society through rewriting the laws, particularly by adopting a new constitution. As admirable as many of the aims and changes are, how will such a constitution be enforced? How will it be implemented to provide at least a partial social transformation of Bolivian society?

In a dialogue with the right-wing governors being facilitated by the President of the Organization of American States, Morales stated, "I want to sign a document that will allow for the pacification of the country...and guarantee a new political constitution for the state." At the same time he noted, "I have a

letter from the mobilized social movements...we await their participation."

Indeed, it is the power of the social movements that is the key for any lasting change in Bolivia. Only they, not the Bolivian military, nor even the Morales government, can implement, make concrete, and defend social and human rights in the constitution. Only they can truly test this new constitution, and move beyond some of its narrow economic limits.

Debates are taking place in Bolivia that do not separate the need to respond to the very real threat from the reactionaries of the right from the necessity to deepen the Bolivian revolutionary process. Despite many hopes, peace—or a stalemate—in Bolivia may not be viable, particularly if the U.S. continues its back-stage maneuvers. How can the power of the mobilized social movements become decisive in defending the Bolivian revolutionary process? Peace through civil war, not only against the reactionary right but for a deepening of social transformation, may of necessity come to be on the agenda.

—E. W.

1. A TITLE OF PUBLICATION: NEWS & LETTERS 2. PUBLICATION NO. 385420 3. DATE OF FILING: Sept. 29, 2008. 4. ISSUE FREQUENCY: Bimonthly. 5. NO. OF ISSUES PUBLISHED ANNUALLY: 6. 6. ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION PRICE: \$5.00 7. LOCATION OF KNOWN OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 36 S. Wabash, Rm 1440, Chicago, IL 60603. 8. LOCATION OF THE HEADQUARTERS OR GENERAL BUSINESS OFFICES OF THE PUBLISHERS: 36 S. Wabash, Rm 1440, Chicago, IL 60603. 9. NAMES AND COMPLETE ADDRESSES OF PUBLISHER: Olga Domanski and Franklin Dmitriyev (Co-National Organizers), 36 S. Wabash, Rm 1440, Chicago, IL 60603. MANAGING EDITOR: Terry Moon, 36 S. Wabash, Rm 1440, Chicago, IL 60603. 10. OWNER: News & Letters, an Illinois Not-For-Profit Corporation, 36 S. Wabash, Rm 1440, Chicago, IL 60603. 11. KNOWN BONDHOLDERS, MORTGAGEES AND OTHER SECURITY HOLDERS OWNING OR HOLDING ONE PERCENT OR MORE OF TOTAL AMOUNT OF BONDS, MORTGAGES OR OTHER SECURITIES: None 12. EXTENT AND NATURE OF CIRCULATION:

	Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Mo.	Actual No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date Preceding 12 Mo.
A. TOTAL NO. COPIES PRINTED:	4000	4000
B. PAID CIRCULATION		
1. Paid/Requested Outside-County Subscriptions	1739	1789
2. Paid In-County Subscriptions	36	37
3. Sales through dealers, carriers, street vendors, counter sales	1732	1743
4. Other classes mailed through USPS	175	131
C. TOTAL PAID AND REQUESTED CIRCULATION:	3682	3700
D. FREE DISTRIBUTION by mail (samples, complimentary and other free)		
1. Outside-county	17	0
2. In-county	1	0
3. Other classes	0	0
E. FREE DISTRIBUTION outside the mail	0	0
F. TOTAL FREE DISTRIBUTION	18	0
G. TOTAL DISTRIBUTION	3700	3700
H. COPIES NOT DISTRIBUTED:	300	300
I. TOTAL	4000	4000
J. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation	100%	100%

16. This Statement of Ownership will be printed in the October-November 2008 issue of this publication. 17. I certify that the information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions. Olga Domanski, Business Manager, Sept. 29, 2008.



Supporters of Evo Morales marching with Bolivian flag toward the city of Santa Cruz.

La Jomada, Mexico City

## PHILOSOPHIC DIALOGUE

## Remembering Cyril Smith

"That is what has been missing—the whole new concept of 'post-Marx Marxism as a pejorative'—it just laid there in *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*." —Raya Dunayevskaya, "June 1, 1987"

The late English Marxist Cyril Smith (1929-2008), who passed away May 8, asked a great question that opened up a lot of new perspectives. He had embarked on a re-examination of the "Marxist-Leninist" assumptions he had carried through his life as a Communist Party member and later as a Trotskyist. This can be seen in his late books, *Marx at the Millennium* (1996) and *Karl Marx and the Future of the Human* (2005).

In response to his reading of Raya Dunayevskaya's work, Smith took issue with her on one important point: "...we can't pick out those bits of Hegel's work which appear to fit in with our own revolutionary ideas. We must take him as a whole... I believe that Dunayevskaya's refusal to attend to Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, illustrates this mistaken attitude. Marx actually made this book the starting point for his life-long struggle with Hegel, when he wrote his 1843 'Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of the State' (*News & Letters*, July 2000).

## SMITH'S THOUGHTFUL CRITIQUE

Smith's was a critique rendered with great thoughtfulness and respect. If taken seriously, it should also serve to illuminate one of Dunayevskaya's signal works, *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* (RLWLKM, 1982). Here she developed her original category of "Post-Marx Marxism" as a pejorative, beginning with Engels." In doing this Dunayevskaya presented an astonishingly original reading of the totality of Marx's work, in RLWLKM's third section.

She began with the 1840s, as Smith indicates must be done. Even before writing his critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, Marx was challenging bourgeois society by his militant support of the right to freedom of the press, and the championing of human rights over property rights. This ultimately led Marx to write his critique of Hegel, of whom Marx felt himself at once the disciple and critic. It also led Marx to his recognition of the proletariat as the revolutionary class.

As Dunayevskaya put it, "What we may call 'the self-determination of the Idea,' Historical Materialism, which was born out of his concept of Alienated Labor,

## Police attack veterans

Baghdad on the Mississippi, that's the name my friend Retired Colonel Ann Wright coined to describe the aggressive tactics employed by police presence at the Republican National Convention in St Paul, Minn.

While attending the Veterans For Peace Convention before the RNC began, I heard Jeremy Scahill speak about arriving at the airport and Amy Goodman and he learned that a *Democracy Now* employee was being detained with a group that organized to video police actions. The authorities wanted no incriminating evidence depicting abusive police actions.

My first encounter with St. Paul police was after the march on Labor Day when a group of veterans attempted to walk from the Capitol grounds to Harriet Island where a concert was underway. All pedestrian access



Veterans for Peace

through downtown St. Paul was blocked by the police.

After the Poor People's March for Economic Justice, the police began setting off concussion grenades and firing tear gas at peaceful marchers attempting to leave the area. As I observed a police perimeter being enclosed, another Veterans For Peace member and I began moving so as to not get caught up in their net. There were approximately 300 Darth Vader-looking goons forming this perimeter. We retreated to an area deemed safe. Again, there were more grenades and gas. The only street allowing escape had a contingent of police at the first block intersection and as we moved in that direction they began lobbing tear gas canisters at us. This action was absolutely unnecessary as we were dispersing as instructed by the only means available and we were gassed along with a few hundred other marchers. I suppose we were being punished for just being present at the march.

Later that evening a group of friends were lounging at Black Dog Saloon and someone suggested we drive over to the mayor's home in St. Paul and register our complaint. Upon arrival at the mayor's home about a dozen of us were met by ten St. Paul police cars. After a bit of discussion we later filed a formal complaint to the Watch Commander by phone. My last evening in St. Paul was spent outside the Ramsey County jail where a few hundred protesters were being held. I was among a couple hundred support people outside the jail.

—Mike Hearington  
Veterans For Peace

was the culmination of the critique Marx began in 1841 when he was telling his Young Hegelian colleagues that it was not enough to criticize Hegel for 'accommodating' to the Prussian state, that what was needed was to discover the principle in Hegelian philosophy that led to that accommodation. Only in that way could one transcend the inadequacy in so genuinely historic a way as to create a new ground for a philosophy of freedom. Freedom was the bones and sinew, the heart and soul, the direction for totally new beginnings" (RLWLKM, p. 126).

Hegel of course had made clear in his *Philosophy of Mind* that freedom played the same role in his own philosophy. In the final paragraphs of that work he stressed the unity of the self-determination of the Idea and the self-bringing forth of liberty. He understood this in terms of bourgeois society and bourgeois right. Marx saw that these two aspects, in bourgeois reality were separated and the unity needed to be re-created.

## RESPONSIBILITY FOR REVOLUTIONARY PHILOSOPHY

It seems that Marx was critiquing Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* in a way that remained entirely true to Hegel's *Philosophy of Mind*. It was a critique that began, in a sense, with Absolute Mind. It allows you to see that what Marx was doing later, in his *1844 Manuscripts* was creating the ground of the historic responsibility for revolutionary philosophy. This entailed both a critique and a re-creation of Hegel's philosophy.

Dunayevskaya is able to project this aspect of Marx so concretely in RLWLKM because her own philosophic breakthrough on Hegel's Absolute Mind in 1953 allowed her to appropriate the totality of Marx's own work as well as the method of Marx's re-creation of Hegel. It seems to me that's the only way to proceed without the kind of either/or that Cyril Smith posed so acutely.

Dunayevskaya didn't spell it out, but the whole structure of RLWLKM is illuminated by her "philosophic moment" of 1953. She makes this crystal clear in a paragraph she added to the last page dated August 26, 1983: "That which Hegel judged to be the synthesis of the 'Self-Thinking Idea' and the Self-Bringing-Forth of Liberty,' Marxist-Humanism holds, is what Marx had called the new society. The many paths to get there are not easy to work out" (RLWLKM, p. XXXVIII).

That was indeed the heart and soul of RLWLKM, including the sections on Rosa Luxemburg and revolutionary democracy, the Women's Liberation Movement, and the 1875 *Critique of the Gotha Program*. These are aspects of concretizing that philosophic moment, on the

uncharted terrain where Marx both critiqued and re-created Hegel. The heart and soul of freedom. This becomes clearer as time passes.

Dunayevskaya was writing with an epic sweep and at the same time a deep philosophic illumination that was meant to speak to the generations that had experienced the failures and contradictions of post-Marx Marxism. Cyril Smith, who had experienced the Communist Party of the *zhdanovshchina* and the vagaries of Gerry Healy's corrupt "Trotskyism" was a good example.

RLWLKM speaks just as well today, when freedom is still long-sought but little apparent. If Cyril Smith never felt that his great question was answered, as I believe, then that wouldn't be because the proper answer wasn't before our eyes.

—Tim Finnigan

## Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution

by Raya Dunayevskaya

Rosa Luxemburg,

Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution

FOREWORD BY ADRIENNE RICH  
Raya Dunayevskaya  
SECOND EDITION

Part I. Rosa Luxemburg as Theoretician, as Activist, as Internationalist

Part II. The Women's Liberation Movement as Revolutionary Force and Reason

Part III. Karl Marx—From Critic of Hegel to Author of *Capital* and Theorist of "Revolution in Permanence"

Foreword by Adrienne Rich

Only \$24.95 (including postage)  
To order see page 7

## YOUTH

by Brown Douglas

## Other Israel's new vision

While much of the U.S. Left insists on a simplistic view of an undifferentiated, imperialist, "Zionist" (a term that can mean something different every time it's used) Israel, there is an Other Israel that is strong and vibrant and insists on projecting an alternative vision. That you don't hear much about it in the bourgeois media—or the progressive media, for that matter—is not only infuriating, but a major reason that many here in the U.S. hold on to a narrow view that harms potential solidarity.

There are a myriad of grassroots movements and organizations in Israel and Palestine opposing the occupation, many of which speak for themselves and are covered frequently in *News & Letters*. I want to focus on youth-centered organizations that are bravely opposing the Israeli occupation, showing human solidarity with their brothers and sisters in Palestine, and putting into action the potentially revolutionary slogan that "another world is possible."

## OASIS OF PEACE

"Alternative Camp" is in its third year, and exists so that youth can escape the mainstream version of nationalist militarism. Youth at the camp are in an environment of resistance to Israel's rulers' occupation of the Palestinian territories. They discuss draft resistance, conscientious objection, and learn from the successes of others who started the refusenik movement in the 1980s as a response to the Israel/Lebanon War.

Importantly, Alternative Camp is held on the grounds of a joint Palestinian/Israeli peace community called Wahat al-Salam/Neve Shalom (Oasis of Peace). Anyone who knows anything about Israeli society will know that any project involving Arab-Jewish equality and cooperation is a risky endeavor and under threat of attack by the Israeli government. This binational, self-governed community contributes to the revolutionary history of spontaneous self-education and self-government arising from freedom struggles, like the Freedom Schools in the southern U.S. during the Civil Rights Movement, and the Zapatista communities arising from the 1994 revolt. While there is clearly no one-to-one comparability between the above organizations, it's important to point out the continuity of self-organization of struggles and the possibilities of developing their contributions from practical experiments to revolutionary praxis.

With roots stretching back to 1970, the Shministim (high school seniors) refuseniks are the youngest and sometimes most vocal opponents of the Israeli occupa-

tion. This year, their letter to President Olmert states, in part:

"We, high-school graduate teens, declare that we shall work against the Israeli occupation and oppression policy in the occupied territories and the territories of Israel...We oppose the actions taken in the name of the 'defense' of the Israeli society (Checkpoints, targeted killing, apartheid roads-available for Jews only, curfews etc.) that serve the occupation and exploitation policy, annex more conquered territories to the State of Israel and tramples the rights of the Palestinian population in an aggressive manner" (see the full letter at: <http://refusetokill.blogspot.com/2008/08/shministim-letter-2008.html>).

This year, Udi Nir was the first Shminist to be sent to military prison—an almost inevitable repercussion from the Israeli state—as a result of the Shministim actions. This has spurred a movement of letter writing and demonstrations to get Udi out of jail, the kind of which is frequently—and sadly—the heart of refusenik solidarity campaigns. Those who hold a narrow view of Israeli society should ask themselves: Do we here in the U.S. have such a vibrant and brave group of resisters that frequently go to jail for opposing our militaristic society? There is no doubt that, to anyone interested in a two-state solution in Israel/Palestine and to all peace loving people of the world, the above movements give some hope that a solution can be worked out for the Middle East.

## ALTERNATIVE TO EXPLOITATION

For those of us who work to build a movement and a revolution that achieves even more than the wildest hopes for Middle East peace and justice, some more questions could be posed: Isn't there something in these movements and groups, which function cooperatively in their struggle for an alternative to "occupation and exploitation," that points towards a new vision of human relations? Does a philosophy—a total view—of revolutionary transformation need to be brought in "from the outside," or is there something indigenous to these struggles that could act as a starting point? Marxist-Humanists hold that when movements and groups like Oasis of Peace, the refuseniks, Shministim and others form during freedom struggles, there exists an impulse within them to transcend the limits that by definition arise from being a group organized around a single issue. The philosophy of self-developing subjectivity and revolutionary humanism that Marxist-Humanism has to offer in solidarity can be a crucial component to transcending all limits and creating a new society.

## WORLD VIEW

# Mugabe in control

Details of the compromise agreement between Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe, Morgan Tsvangirai and the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) have finally emerged. Also, the stepping down of South African President Thabo Mbeki who helped negotiate it sheds light on the connection between the two countries.

In the new agreement between Mugabe's ZANU-PF and the MDC, Tsvangirai becomes Prime Minister, in appearance sharing executive authority with Mugabe. He will chair a council of ministers, while Mugabe will chair the cabinet. Two deputy prime ministers will balance the two current deputy presidents. In 18 months there is supposed to be a referendum on a new Constitution for Zimbabwe, overseen by a committee of Parliament.

But beyond the eerie symmetry, Mugabe still retains the lion's share of power. He will make most important

## Dare we hope?

**JERUSALEM, ISRAEL** —As Carole King sings:  
*You know, the people were quite pleased  
'Cause the outlaw had been seized  
And on the whole, it was a very good year  
For the undertaker.*

Well, the alleged outlaw, former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, awaits indictment, probably on charges of fraud, abuse of public trust, maybe bribery, too. The evidence draws a portrait of a man committed to the good life and political aggrandizement, but it does not point to a major scheme for financial bonanza. Olmert was not toppled because of corruption, but because he delivered to Israel its first loss at war—in Lebanon, of course.

And now Tzipi Livni—scion of a militant dynasty, graduate of Mossad covert operations, protege of Arik Sharon—was elected head of the ruling party in Israel, and she too talks about change, a new way of doing politics, a preference for peace over territory. This is the deepening of a direction that had been taken by Sharon and reinforced by Olmert, his successor. All three had been staunch advocates of "the greater land of Israel" ideology until recent years. Investing in the occupied territories was a long and expensive mistake, said Olmert.

But can we count on Livni to do the right thing, to sit down and negotiate a peace that will be acceptable to both sides—a two-state solution that shares Jerusalem as the capital, a just and viable scenario for the Palestinian refugees, an equitable distribution of water resources, investment in the development of Palestine to ensure its economic viability?

Tzipi Livni is not Mother Teresa nor the Dalai Lama. She probably more closely resembles Alfred Nobel himself, once called a "merchant of death" for inventing and commercializing dynamite. Livni, too, served the military establishment in Israel until she left it for a law career. Will she, like Nobel, also seek a place in history by making up for years of feeding the war machine?

Livni will have many obstacles, the first being to forge a government coalition including partners who are not on her side. She will have to take risks of substance, facing down the Israeli war makers, standing up to settlers with their implied threat of a divisive and bloody civil war.

Two years ago, Livni was the only Israeli cabinet member who spoke out against launching an all-out war in Lebanon at a moment when a frenzy of vengeance and nationalism gripped the entire nation. Can we expect more such political and moral courage? Dare we be hopeful?

Or will it again be another good year for the undertaker?

—Gila Svirsky

decisions, subject to "consultation" with Tsvangirai, but not to veto by him.

Most importantly, the deal takes no note of the demands of the "day-to-day struggle of ordinary Zimbabweans" (see *News & Letters* Aug.-Sept. 2008). The compromise agreement is opposed by the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) and many civil society organizations.

It will be interesting to see how the resignation of President Mbeki will affect the new situation. His support of Mugabe had highlighted tensions within the African National Congress' (ANC) ruling coalition, with the South African Communist Party (SACP) recommending Mbeki's recall along with a greater accountability of the ANC's leadership. The SACP also opposes the compromise agreement with Mugabe in Zimbabwe, and the Congress of South African Trade Unions came into conflict with Mbeki over its support for the ZCTU. This ambivalence will be tested under the ANC leadership of Jacob Zuma, who has expressed various attitudes toward Mugabe in the past.

When asked what could be expected from Zuma at home, South African activist and poet Dennis Brutus had this to say: Zuma "went to Davos, the World Economic Forum, [and] met with Merrill Lynch and said, 'Don't worry, the economic policies that Mbeki adopted, I'm going to continue those policies.' So, in fact, there will be a continuity on the economic level, even while people are arguing that the corporations should not be given priority. The jobs and housing, people living in the shacks and in the shanties, as they were under apartheid, still living under the same conditions."

Beyond any ruler's ambivalence, it is the masses of Southern Africa who must be heard right now.

—Gerry Emmett

## Un-natural disasters

In August and September, four huge storms struck Haiti, causing loss of life and enormous physical destruction. The death toll reached toward 1,000, and the number of homeless came close to a million. As devastating as are these natural disasters, it is the un-naturalness of their consequences that characterizes Haiti in its human suffering and vast damage to the land.

Deforestation—more than 95% of Haiti's forests no longer exist—was the immediate cause for the rush of water and plummeting rivers of mud that swallowed up hundreds of people and pulverized thousands of ramshackle houses. It is a deforestation that lies deep in the history of Haiti, first in the colonial/slave world, then in the post-Haitian revolution 19th century, followed by the deepening impoverishment of its people and land in the 20th century and continuing to today.

Its continual deep impoverishment has meant that the poor, who live on its hills, have for decades cut the remaining trees for survival. They did not and do not have access to cooking gas or kerosene, so they obtain fuel by cutting trees and making charcoal. As Paul Farmer, a doctor and long-time human rights activist in Haiti, notes: "They have been driven into a corner, the people I serve, you know, the rural poor. Their only option for cooking has been to make this charcoal, and they're going to continue as long as they have no jobs, no food, and no fuel."

In "normal" times some 70% of Haitians have no access to potable water, resulting in high incidents of intestinal parasites and amoebic dysentery. The Inter-American Development Bank had approved loans to rework the water and sanitary system for two of Haiti's cities. But for political reasons, the U.S. has worked for years to slow down the disbursement of this money.

—Eugene Walker

## India's floods show capital's inhumanity

The death toll in the current Indian flooding is estimated at 2,000 people, and literally millions more have been displaced. The first flood disaster occurred in northern Bihar last month, where an embankment on the Kosi River was breached to the extent that the river dug a new course, permanently wiping out many villages. As many as a thousand villages there have been inundated.

Now disastrous flooding has also spread to Uttar



Independent Media Center

Pradesh in the north, and Orissa in the east. In Uttar Pradesh more than 50,000 people are in relief camps, with nearly three million people affected. In Orissa, more than 3.7 million people have been affected, with thousands of villages currently underwater. Up to 600,000 people remain marooned on rooftops or high ground at this moment.

As in Bihar last month, there is a shortage of rescue and relief efforts and there is anger. Conflict are reported with authorities in Orissa. While some government spokesmen claim that there is nothing more they could have done, a closer look at the situation in Bihar tells a different story.

Bihar is one of India's poorest states, and many of the surviving villagers escaped with nothing but the clothes on their backs. Over a third of Bihar's 90 million people already lived below the poverty line, with annual per capita income estimated at just \$160. In the wake of the flood, these people were left in crowded refugee camps with shortages of food, clean drinking water, and medicine.

Residents accused the Indian government of failing to respond with proper urgency, sending too few rescue boats and helicopters, and too little food aid. There are reports of local government-connected gangs in Bihar taking possession of rescue boats and making off with relief materials. Corrupt politicians and bureaucrats have done the same in previous emergency situations.

Even more telling is what politicians and bureaucrats didn't do. The Kosi River embankment that was breached is near the border of India and Nepal. It had been built 50 years ago, following another round of deadly flooding in the area. It was meant to be a temporary embankment, expected to last 25 years and be succeeded by more permanent flood control measures. But the Indian central government took no further action, and neither apparently did local authorities in Bihar.

Nothing was done even though Bihar is one of the most densely populated areas of India, and studies had drawn attention to the ever-growing number of people at risk from floods there.

It is a scenario repeated again and again. The extent to which a society has become a human society can be measured by its planning for, and its response to, such "natural" disasters.

—G. E.

## NEWS AND LETTERS COMMITTEES

# Who We Are And What We Stand For

News and Letters Committees is an organization of Marxist-Humanists that since its birth has stood for the abolition of capitalism, both in its private property form as in the U.S., and its state property form, as it has historically appeared in state-capitalist regimes calling themselves Communist as in Russia and China. We stand for the development of new human relations, what Marx first called a new Humanism.

*News & Letters* was founded in 1955, the year of the Detroit wildcat strikes against Automation and the Montgomery Bus Boycott against segregation—activities which signaled a new movement from practice that was itself a form of theory. *News & Letters* was created so that the voices of revolt from below could be heard unseparated from the articulation of a philosophy of liberation.

Raya Dunayevskaya (1910-1987), founder of the body of ideas of Marxist-Humanism, became Chairwoman

of the National Editorial Board and National Chairwoman of the Committees from its founding to 1987. Charles Denby (1907 - 83), a Black production worker, author of *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal*, became editor of the paper from 1955 to 1983. Dunayevskaya's works, *Marxism and Freedom, from 1776 until Today* (1958), *Philosophy and Revolution: From Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao* (1973), and *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* (1982) spell out the philosophic ground of Marx's Humanism internationally, as *American Civilization on Trial* concretizes it on the American scene and shows the two-way road between the U.S. and Africa.

This body of ideas challenges all those desiring freedom to transcend the limitations of post-Marx Marxism, beginning with Engels. In light of the crises of our nuclearly armed world, it becomes imperative not only to reject

what is, but to reveal and further develop the revolutionary Humanist future inherent in the present. The new visions of the future which Dunayevskaya left us in her work from the 1940s to the 1980s are rooted in her discovery of Marx's Marxism in its original form as a new Humanism and in her re-creation of that philosophy for our age as Marxist-Humanism. This is recorded in the documents on microfilm and open to all under the title *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection—Marxist-Humanism: A Half-Century of Its World Development*.

Dunayevskaya's philosophic comprehension of her creation and development of Marxist-Humanism, especially as expressed in her 1980s writings, presents the vantage point for re-creating her ideas anew. Seeking to grasp that vantage point for ourselves and make it available to all who struggle for freedom, we have published Dunayevskaya's original 1953 philosophic breakthrough and her

final 1987 Presentation on the Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy in *The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism* (1989), and donated new supplementary volumes to the *Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*. News and Letters Committees aims at developing and concretizing this body of ideas for our time.

In opposing this capitalistic, racist, sexist, heterosexist, class-ridden society, we have organized ourselves into a committee form of organization rather than any elitist party "to lead." We participate in all class and freedom struggles, nationally and internationally. As our *Constitution* states: "It is our aim...to promote the firmest unity among workers, Blacks and other minorities, women, youth and those intellectuals who have broken with the ruling bureaucracy of both capital and labor." We do not separate mass activities from the activity of thinking. Send for a copy of the *Constitution* of News and Letters Committees.